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THE SMART SET

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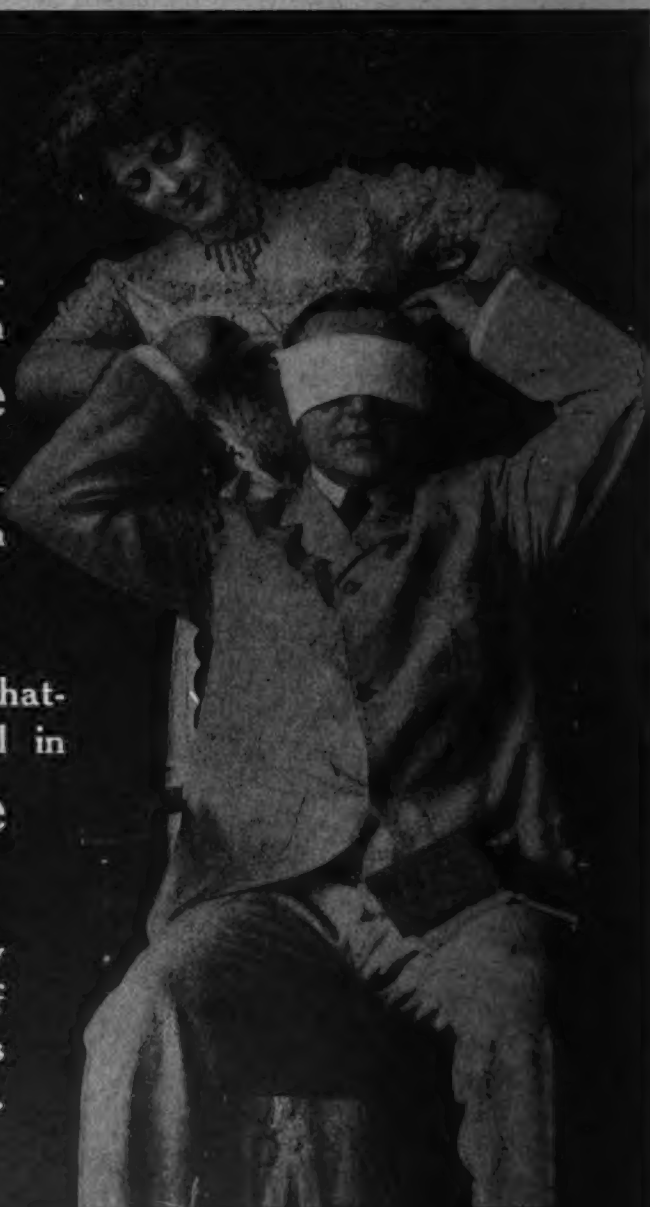
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will have among its contributors a longer list than usual of well-known names. Authors who have won established reputations are comparatively few and hence the competition for their work is keen. Some of

the names that will appear in the November number are: **Baroness Orczy**, **Eleanor Hoyt Brainerd**, **Kate Jordan**, **H. B. Marriott-Watson**, **Constance Smedley**, **Mary Moss**, **Margaret Sutton Briscoe**, **Caroline Duer**.

But names are not all. The stories will be of the first quality. The novelette, "*Beau Brocade*," by **Baroness Orczy**, is a romance of great dramatic power and unusual literary excellence.

A short story, "*Folly Farm*," by **Eleanor Hoyt Brainerd**, will probably be considered next in importance. **H. B. Marriott-Watson**, in "*The Prince's Pictures*," tells an absorbing story of adventure in a style far removed from the stereotyped adventure story. "*The Feet of Youth*," by **Kate Jordan**, is as attractive as its title indicates. "*Her Only Chance*," by **Caroline Duer** and another, "*H. Otway Presents*," by **Mary Moss**, "*The Stony Path*," by **Constance Smedley**, "*A Successor to Susan*," by **Sarah Guernsey Bradley**, are among the other short stories. **Margaret Sutton Briscoe** and **Lady Broome** contribute the essays. An unusually interesting dramatic article by **Channing Pollock**, and fine poems by **Curtis Hidden Page**, **Madeline Bridges**, **John Curtis Underwood** and others complete a very exceptional number.

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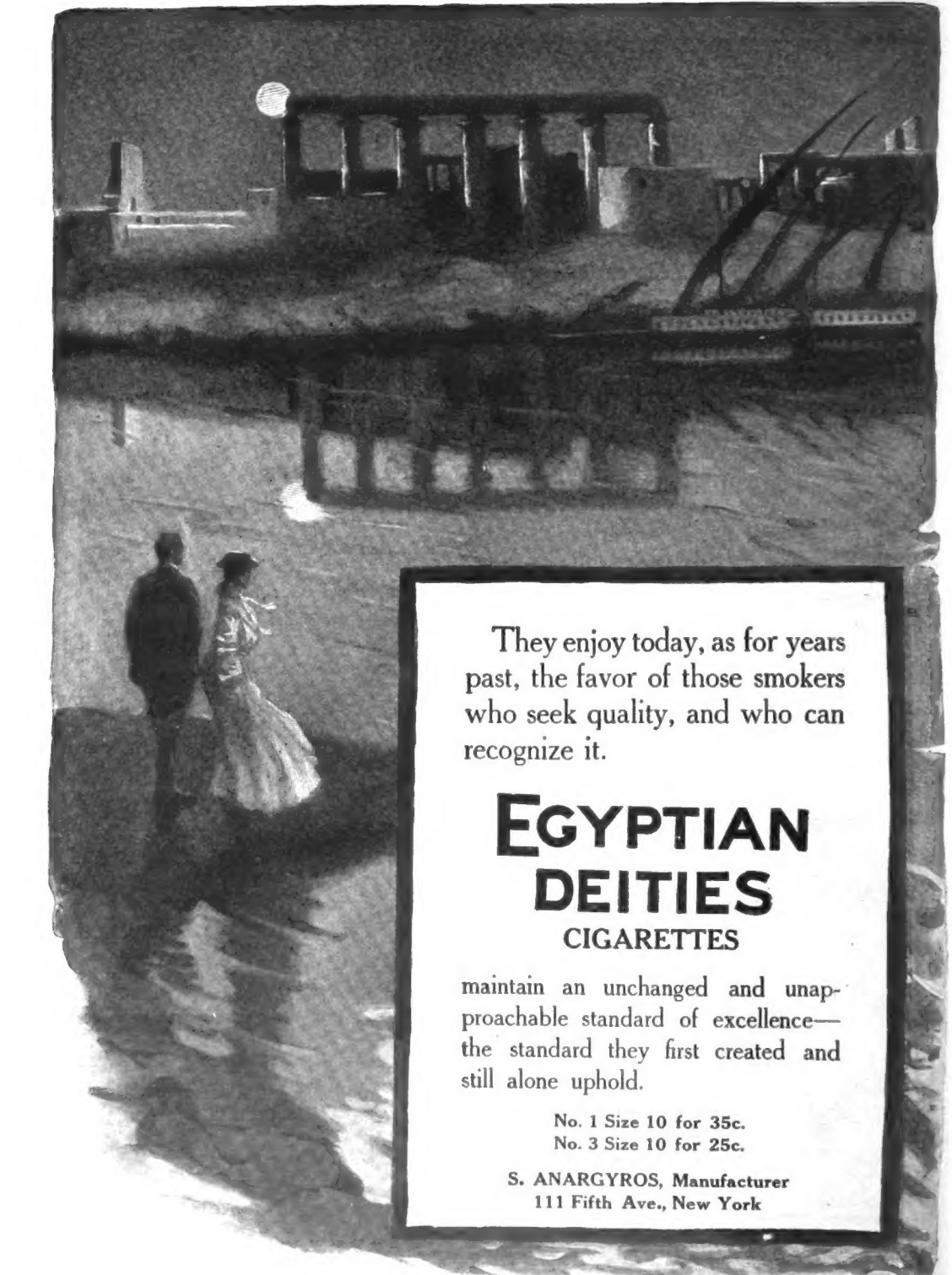
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Vol. XX

NOVEMBER, 1906

No. 3

CONTENTS

	PAGE
The Conflict	Emma Wolf 1
The Final Note	Arthur Stringer 45
A Wicked Woman	Jack London 46
Amalgamated	Edwin L. Sabin 51
The Dead-Line	Inez Haynes Gillmore 52
The Wail of a Waitress	Ethel M. Kelley 63
By Hasban's Marge	Clinton Scollard 64
Lancelot	Dorothea Deakin 65
Rondel	Theodosia Garrison 72
The Messenger	Elsa Barker 73
His Fate	Tom P. Morgan 74
Salvage	Ward Clark 75
At End	Thomas S. Jones, Jr. 83
The World and the Lover	Richard Le Gallienne 84
The Hour	Harry H. Kemp 88
Out of Nazareth	Grace MacGowan Cooke 89
The Helpmeet	Mary Tracy Earle 96
The Dreams That Never Can Come True	William Hamilton Hayne 104
The Beauty of the Law	Ellis Parker Butler 105
An Interrupted Sermon	Harriet Gaylord 111
A Soul for Art	Katharine Metcalfe Roof 116
The Wayfarers	Madeline Bridges 123
The King's Jester	J. J. Bell 124
Reverdy's Wife	Irene Fowler Brown 127
A Curse	Martha G. D. Bianchi 130
L'Attente	J.-H. Rosny 131
A Voyage of Discovery	Amos De Lany 134
La Trêve	Rosemonde Rostand 145
The Red Setter	Arthur Stanley Wheeler 146
The Reason	Violette Kimball Dunn 157
The Interval	Arthur Davison Ficke 159
Ecstasy	Duncan Campbell Scott 160

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THE DECEMBER "SMART SET"

There will be two very notable contributions in the next issue of THE SMART SET. One will be a powerful novel, with an English setting, and a theme wonderful for its virility and strong note of passion. The title is

"THE SHOULDER-KNOT," By MRS. HENRY DUDENEY

The second great feature will be the publication of the one-act play from the French of George Docquois, "After the Opera." This play proved the sensation of Paris during the past season, and it will soon be acted in this country by Mr. Arnold Daly. THE SMART SET is particularly fortunate in being able to present it to its readers at this time. The play is a remarkable example of the modern French mastery of the technique of the drama, and its absorbing story will hold American readers.

The short stories will be by Juliet Wilbor Tompkins, Arthur Sullivant Hoffman, William Hamilton Osborne, Grace MacGowan Cooke, Mary Moss and Anne Warner. The essay will be from Gelett Burgess's brilliant pen, and well-known verse-writers will supply the poetry.

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THE CONFLICT

By Emma Wolf

“AND here, dear, is my modest little birthday gift. I hope you will like it.”

She knelt on the floor, unwinding the heavy brown paper wrappings from the bulky object. A laugh hid in the demure corners of her mouth, and Adam, looking down at her in his leisurely, quizzical way, his hands in his pockets, his thin, tall figure slightly stooped, caught the infection of her subdued hilarity, and said, “Oh,” in sudden, assumed bashfulness.

“But you must undo the ribbons,” she directed solemnly when the further concealing layer of tissue-paper, daintily bound about with tiny scarlet ribbons, stood, in teasing incongruity, between him and fruition.

“Then, ‘let joy be unconfined!’” he proclaimed grandiloquently, stooping to his task.

The soft enfoldings fell aside revealing an ice-cream freezer in all its utilitarian suggestiveness. Lillian leaned back, her head perked a little to one side to note the effect.

Adam’s face rippled with appreciation, his enormous mouth grinning wide.

“By Jove!” he exclaimed, rubbing his eyes, “can I mine eyes believe? An ice-cream freezer! Heart of my heart, interpreter of my tastes, come to my arms.” He drew her up to him with a rapturous flourish, and she laughed with him in youthful gaiety.

“I was undecided between the freezer and an opera-bag,” Lillian confided seriously as they sat down to breakfast and the little maid brought in the coffee-urn. “But I finally de-

cided on the freezer because it more nearly matches the garden-hose you gave me on mine. You see, you water the garden, and I get the flowers, and I turn the freezer and you get the cream.”

“Like the very old House that Jack built,” approved Adam, tapping his egg-shell. “This is the freezer provided by she who froze the cream all eaten by he—my dear, the salt, please—who—but your look cries ‘sufficient unto the day,’ etc.; so, my lady, the muse waits. Do you know, I was thinking that for your next birthday I shall get you a new fishing outfit. You see, I catch the fish and you eat ‘em.”

Lillian pondered deeply, breaking her roll. “Good. But I’m not sure I want that.” She shook her head in doubt. “I’ve been thinking that by that time I’ll need a new overcoat. You see, you’ll wear the overcoat, and—I’ll see you.”

He laughed into her eyes in great content—she always fell into such perfect step to the beat of his nonsensical drum. “Cast no disparagus upon my overcoat, madam,” he said sternly. “It belongs to the hardware department of this establishment and is warranted to last another hundred years, more or less. Your extravagance is beyond belief—it is reminiscent of the decline and fall of a much richer empire than this matrimonial state. Let us remember—lest we forget! No, what you’ll need will be a new razor. You see, I’ll——”

“My lord, your coffee waits,” she suggested, and Adam strove to catch up with time.

“As I have remarked elsewhere,

tempus fugit," he said with the last hasty swallow and a regretful shake of the head, "and I fly with it. But 'where are *you* going to, my pretty maid?'"

He was making for the door, and Lillian, following, made answer, as she had daily made answer to his humor for the past twelvemonth.

"I'm going a-mowing, sir," she said, and they both smiled their habitual smile over Adam's time-worn metaphor of the carpet-sweeper.

She helped him with the overcoat, the worn edges, which she had noticed the day before, again appealing wearily out to her.

"You are not going back to the office tonight, are you?" she asked. Several seconds elapsed before Adam, searching for his gloves, turned round to her. "Do you object to that arrangement, Lil?" he demanded in unexpected sharpness.

"Do you mean the two nights a week off—from matrimony—you've been treating me to for the past month? Do *you*?"

"Absolutely; but the Head Baker expects us to work these days for our daily bread—and cake—and we're in with the bread line. But not tonight, of course. It's a night we celebrate, and you know we have seats for the theatre. Anything I can do for you?"

"Nothing. Don't work too hard—and a happy day to you, dear. Oh, I'm forgetting. Which do you prefer—pineapple or strawberry ice?"

"Um—m—both," he answered, kissing her. "The couplet will be a poem, I'm sure." He picked up his hat and opened the door, fingering the knob hesitatingly for a moment. Then he turned abruptly upon her, scanning her slight girlishness closely. "Happy, Lil?" he asked irrelevantly.

Startled, she flushed from her rounded chin to the sweep of her golden hair. "Happy?" she echoed. "What a question! Don't I seem happy? It's—it's all very—sweet." She ended gently, if shortly.

"Is it?" he asked, his own face flaming in unusual sensitiveness.

"Then 'all's right with the world.' But it's all so different from your life with—Her. I'm so different, and I was wondering——"

"Silly fellow," she interrupted gaily, giving him a slight shove. "Get to work. But what set you wondering?"

"Oh—things. The word poem, for instance. It's rather an impertinent question, I know, but doesn't the divine frenzy ever seize you any more?"

"Poetry? What need to write it when one lives it?" she said grandly, sweeping him a deep curtsy. "Now, go!" She let him kiss her again, and the door finally closed behind him.

She stood for several seconds holding the knob as if holding him out. When she turned about all the soft girlishness had vanished from her strained, white face.

"I hate it!" she whispered between her teeth, stamping her foot hotly. "I hate it!"

She took an aimless step forward, seized the back of the hall chair, for want of something better, and shook it violently as if to wrench it from the seat. She twisted her head wildly from side to side, as if pursued. Then, suddenly, she fled like some furtive thing into the tiny living-room, and shut the door. She sank into the first chair, clutching its arms as if to hold herself down.

"Keep still," she muttered to herself, and then, "Oh, mother!" but she was quite unconscious of her cry for help. It was her first lapse since her marriage, and repression had only strengthened the indomitable recurrent propensity.

"The sordidness of it all!" she clinched out. "The narrow, material monotony! The trite, commonplace, steady—*safety*—of him—and his quotations!"

She sprang up, looking furiously about her, the old instinct to smash things, to dash out and away, to "play hookey" from goodness, strong upon her, but restrained, frustrated, by a habit of discipline just as strong.

"Poems!" she mocked, and snatched

up a pencil from the open desk. "Poems!" she laughed, and dug her pencil into the paper lying before her.

"Damn!" she wrote in great, black, deliberate letters. "Damn—damn—damn!"

Her hand was tense with the force of the contention within her; she looked up with a fierce, sneering hate. "Good!" she scoffed fiercely, as if in echo to a silent reprimand. "Of course he's good. So am I good. Who is better? Don't I follow your precepts, keep to the beaten track, muck in the safe enclosure made for weaklings and fools? Am I not his monkey-on-a-stick? Don't I smile when he smiles—which is always!—mind his humors—or, rather, Humor—gr-r-r!—mind his house—jig it and prig it in the way dogma and convention make saintly for the comfort of slaves! You talked me into marrying him—you! You said he was 'so good'—so good! But what else? What else? I tell you it's stupid—this goodness you preach. Oh, I shake my fist in the face of all goodness—I despise it so!" She brought her fist down with a crash upon the slight desk, and stood dazed by the reverberation chiming like the echo of her own chaotic mind.

But the next minute her eyes widened strangely. Through the open window came the thin strains of a distant violin. Someone was playing a merry-mad Bacchanalian air—sun-drunk, taunting, elusive—free.

Lillian, arrested, listened, her head thrown back, her nostrils dilated, seemingly transfixed. Something danced—goat-footed—about a tree. Was it she?

"I am a satyr," she thought, with an inward smile, "a satyr among satyrs." And she followed another, goat-footed like herself. Silently, madly, they footed it, sun-drunk, earth-raptured, about the tree.

The music died away. Still suffused in its witchery, Lillian came back reluctantly to her visible world.

"What was it?" she wondered, a sense of fatigue catching her breath

as though she had been running. "That was *me!* And I loved it, I, Patricia Bonney's daughter!" A wave of hot shame flamed over her, her head drooped, she sank into a chair, covering her face with her hands.

It was in moments of reaction like this that Lillian Bonney had, in the days prior to her marriage, crept away to write the exquisite poems which, compiled later under the title of "Poems of Triumph," had given her an enviable fame among all lovers of the beautiful. It had been these self-same expressions of exaltation, transfigured by a sweet serenity, which had first brought Adam Wynne, the enthusiastic and omnivorous reader, to her feet. They had tempered his sunny exuberance with a wistful touch of reverence which closer intercourse with the slender, golden-haired young poet had only deepened.

He had met her while on a visit to the lovely Georgian town where she lived her serene, almost secluded life, with her mother, Patricia Bonney, that exquisite pattern of all that is best in Southern womanhood. His ready laugh, his light jocosity, had formed a pleasing interlude in the monotonous harmony of their days, and his diffident, yet persistent pursuit of Lillian's companionship had made a gay and not unpleasing vacation in her accustomed calm. Yet when, with becoming humility, but undoubted fervor, he had laid his life and love at her feet, she looked down with wondering brows. Not so Patricia Bonney. To her daughter's startled gentleness, she seemed to seize the proposal of the inconsequential railroad clerk as though it had been the goal of all her absorbing maternal care and ambitions.

"You will consider this well, Lillian. No girl can dispose of the gift of such an offer without due thought."

"But what gift, mother?"

"The gift of a good man's promise of love and protection through life. Adam Wynne is one of the few in whom such a promise is life itself. It is something you can anchor yourself to without a misgiving or a question.

And such an anchor is *the* essential in a woman's happiness, no matter who or what she is. Don't mistake—in the test; all the rest is vanity."

"But—good? One expects that among one's friends without saying. But mere goodness isn't very much to attract, is it? There are other—greater—better things."

"Better things? What do you mean by better things? Riches? Surely you know the unsatisfying value of that—you know the ephemeral nature of all the joys that excite. We've gauged their value, haven't we, dear? Besides, he can give you all the little comforts to which you are accustomed, and, at thirty-two, he has still time to feather the nest with down. And, meanwhile, you can always have the silver candlesticks for dinner."

Mrs. Bonney's quiet smile, so full of meaning, was reflected in her daughter's responsive face. The Bonney candlesticks had always been symbolic of the Bonneys themselves to the entire little circle of which they formed a distinguished and unique part. Heirlooms belonging to Mrs. Bonney, dating back to colonial Virginia days, solid, yet exquisitely chased and polished, with their three graceful branches holding none but white wax candles, a Bonney dinner, though of the most frugal sort, was never known to have been eaten without them. With their glow shedding softness from either end of the simple board upon Mrs. Bonney's high-bred face and her daughter's dainty beauty, a guest at the Bonney table felt himself in good company. Indeed, the inevitability of their appearance had created the current *mot* with which Mrs. Bonney had completed her argument in her contention against some fancied materialism existing in her daughter's mind.

"Yes, I will always have the candlesticks for dinner—and they cover a multitude of sins of omission. But, mother, dinners were farthest from my thoughts. It is he—Adam himself—with his constant quotations and commonplaces of expression which are so boring—and his summing up of every-

thing as 'bully,' or 'ripping,' or 'rot,' and—and his never-failing good-humor. Oh!"

"Then you do not like him?"

"Like him? Of course I do. No one can help *liking* Adam; but——"

"You mean he does not create in you a fever of the blood which youth calls love?"

"Oh, mother! You who loved my father so deeply!"

"As you will love Adam Wynne. Can you not trust to my wider knowledge, child? There are loves and loves, and in my experience I have found none more enduring, more enviable than the sense of absolute steadfastness and devotion which Adam Wynne's love for you bears with it."

"But, mother, he—there's nothing to him. Scratch him deep enough and you'd find only a joke."

Mrs. Bonney knew her daughter. She let a moment slip by in silence. Then: "You have forgotten the one great feature of his love which gives the lie to that assertion."

"What is that?"

"His worship of Lillian Bonney."

And Lillian, young, impressionable to anything that bespoke beauty of mind, flushed through all her sensitive being.

Mrs. Bonney had caught her cue, and she held it up like a radiance to the hypnotized gaze of her lovely, soft-browed daughter until she had led her gently, but indomitably—as she had always led her—safe into Adam Wynne's arms. She had only waited to see them comfortably settled in their little Western home where Adam's position called them, and then, surprisingly, as if the life-thread had stretched so far and could stretch no farther, she had looked upon her work and found it good, and had closed her watchful eyes and slipped away.

Perhaps now, the paroxysm over, had Lillian been left to herself with the memory of her mother's words and compelling influence enchainning her, she might have found in the silence a sweet peace which would have breathed itself rhythmically into words that

would have delighted Adam's heart and found honest confirmation, for the time, in her own. But she was frustrated by a light rapping on the door.

"Yes," she answered, hastily finding herself. "Yes?"

The little maid cautiously put in her head. "I've been looking all over the house for you," she said in breathless indignation. "There's Miss Page waiting——"

"Show her in, Nora."

When Edith Page came into view Lillian was her usual morning-glorious self.

"I'm shamefully early, I know," laughed the girl from the doorway. "I know you are busy at this time, you wonderful little housekeeper, but I found some things of yours and I had to bring them."

"But aren't you leaving for the mountains today?" asked Lillian, drawing her to a chair and taking another close to her. "I thought your mother said——"

"Yes, we are—this afternoon. But I had to come in person to deliver Wilfred's message—nothing else would do. He says if you don't come up next week he'll droop and pine so that you'll have to come then, and a dead man is harder to cheer up than a half-alive one. He does think a heap of you, Lil."

"Dear boy!—he's a bird of my feather, you see. But I'm going to miss you all very much, Edith."

"Of course you are—and the Chamberlains and Allens gone, too. Why, *why* won't you know a few more people intimately? That exclusiveness of yours is a dreadful habit."

"The fault of my bringing-up, you know. We have always been that way; but a habit can be broken, and I'll try to get over it with the Summer—for Adam's sake. It was my good luck that my old schoolmate and forty-second cousin, Edith Page, happened to precede me in this Western migration by a whole year. You helped me out a lot."

"Talking of schoolmates—I've found something that set me reminiscing

about you. Heavens, how I laughed! And the queerest thing! mother found something else she wanted you to have before we left, and I said I'd run in with them this morning and give them with Wil's message. Adam gone?"

"Of course—he's the busiest man in the world. But where's your treasure-trove, Edith?"

"Will you open your eyes and shut your mouth?"

Lillian complied, with a severely repressed smile.

"Well, then," pursued the other, "look at this." She drew from her handbag a slip of paper, deep-creased and yellow with age. "Hands off!" she ordered, holding it before her eyes. "Read it aloud."

Lillian leaned closer. The words were written in a straight, childish hand, but she deciphered them easily, and wonderingly read aloud:

"Fa-lick, fa-lick! The rain it goes pit-a-pat—

Oh, why don't it cut and run!
Tick-tick, tick-tack! The clock it goes just like that—

Oh, why don't it stop for fun?
Oh, they are good sheep, and we are good sheep,

And we're all good sheep together,
And we're led by a sheep who is led by a sheep,

And we can't get away from the tether."

She looked up at her friend with lifted brows. "What is it?" she laughed.

"Why, Lillian Bonney Wynne, don't you remember that day?" She was laughing somewhat hysterically into Lillian's eyes.

"What day?" puzzled Lillian.

"That rainy day—in school—when Miss Clarke told us to write a composition on the rain, and you—wrote that? Don't you remember," she laughed on, enjoying Lillian's questioning face, "how you wrote it in a second and sat gazing straight ahead, and Miss Clarke told you to 'write!' and you said sweetly, 'I have written,' and how she glowered at you, and when we had all finished she ordered you to stand up and read what you had written, and you stood up and read—that? We thought you had suddenly gone crazy,

and Miss Clarke pounced on you and said you should come to Miss Jeffreys 'as fast as your legs can carry you,' and we heard you clattering down the hall with her like a wild animal, and——"

She stopped for breath and to wipe her eyes, and Lillian laughed oddly with her.

"Don't you remember?" persisted Edith.

"Yes. But go on."

"You came back with red eyes and gentle as a dove. You never told us what happened in Miss Jeffreys's office. What did she do, Lillian?"

"She told me to apologize to Miss Clarke, and when I answered that I had only expressed an inspiration, she said she would inform my mother. Well—that's all. Where did you get the thing?"

"I found it in your history the next day. But *did* you suddenly go mad, Lil?"

"You goose! How should I know why the schoolgirl Lillian Bonney felt like a young colt in harness?"

"But you were always so grave and sweet, and when——"

"I 'was good, I was very, very good, and when I was bad I was horrid.' Give it to me, Edith."

"What! rob my children of a possibly fortune-bearing, original manuscript? Never! But this—ah, this—is all yours. Mother found it yesterday while rummaging in an old trunk, and said you must have it before we go."

She handed her a small square package and watched her undo it with girlish curiosity.

"Why, it's a daguerreotype," murmured Lillian at sight of the old-fashioned, embossed black case. "Who is it?" She unclasped the tiny hooks and looked down at the pictured face.

"What a handsome, horrid man!" she said slowly, gazing as if fascinated upon its strong, masculine beauty. "Who is it, Edith?"

"Why, Lillian Bonney," cried the girl in open-eyed, laughing surprise, "do you mean to say you don't recognize your own father?"

Lillian's face turned a dull white. "I—have—never seen a picture of my father," she said in odd distinctness, something tight in her throat dragging at speech. "My mother's were all burned—there had been a fire—she said—in the old Virginia home." She felt a strange excitement shaking her and bent her pale face lower, her fingers tightening upon the case. "How very—handsome he was!"

"You are the living image of him," the other asserted brightly, striving to cover the unexpected embarrassment. "Only you are a girl and, of course, different. It's all in the expression, I suppose. My mother said Richard Bonney was the handsomest dev—" She stopped short, Lillian's gray eyes covering her in quiet challenge.

"Go on," she ordered gently.

The girl sprang to her feet with a nervous laugh. "Yes. I am going on. It's getting late and I don't want—Why, Lillian Bonney!"

Lillian barred her way, her arms outstretched, her back pressed tight against the door. "Finish your sentence," she commanded.

"What sentence? You are too strange for words this morning, Lillian."

"Your mother said 'he was the handsomest dev—' Devil?"

"Now, Lil!" The girl almost wept.

"It's all in the picture—you're not divulging anything. But just to prove. What else? You know a great deal more. It's all in your face."

"No, no, no!"

"Yes."

"But, Lillian—dearest—what can I know that you don't know?"

"I know—nothing."

The girl stared, frightened by her hoarse voice, by her calm intensity.

"You see," Lillian went on, in the same even hoarseness, "there is something to tell. You can't hide it. Tell it."

Edith, speechless, had turned fully from her.

"My mother never told me anything," Lillian urged in imperious gentleness, "anything—that that face reveals. She said he died when I was

two years old, and we went then from Virginia to Georgia. She said a nobler man than he never lived. Edith, you are going to tell me the truth now." She put her hand upon her shoulder and pressed her into a chair, holding her firmly down.

"I'd rather die than tell," Edith declared passionately, with set chin and quivering lips.

Lillian's short laugh of triumph rang out. "Is it as dreadful as all that? Poor Edith! But if I can bear hearing it, surely you can bear telling it, Edith, honey!"

"Lillian, don't—let me go! What do you take me for? If your mother saw fit to conceal——"

"No doubt she was afraid to cause me sorrow. You know her battle-cry was, 'Look for the beautiful—look for the beautiful!' She fed me on it like—pap. That's how I happened to find you, honey. But now—now, I'm grown up, and my stomach is stronger, and you—are you my friend or only Patricia Bonney's?" She looked down at her, lovely, pallid, compelling.

The girl suddenly cowered. "Lil," she pleaded, "don't make me. I'm afraid."

"Afraid? For me?"

"No, of her—your mother, Cousin Patricia. She always frightened me, she was so grave and calm. She was always right—she knew so much better—and she loved you so."

"Very well, Edith." Her hands fell from her, she drew a step aside. It was quietly said, quietly done, but the movement bore all the finality of friendship renounced.

Edith responded. She sprang up, dragged her into a chair and flung herself down beside her. "My mother said no one could resist him—your father," she burst forth hotly in exultation. "And you—you are like him, Lillian Bonney. You compel one against one's better judgment—you force me."

"Ah!"

"I don't mean that—of course I don't mean that exactly. How could

you be like one who was every inch a devil—beauty and all?"

Lillian's hand closed slowly, like an iron vise over hers, and, as if the contact commanded, the girl's words came, though more haltingly.

"He—he just broke her heart, dear," she said simply. And Lillian continued to smile her pale, set smile from dumb lips while Edith limped on. "And she was strong-hearted. He was never true to her. Everybody knew it. He couldn't be. He was just—lawless. He was made that way. He couldn't stand restraint of any sort. It was 'in his blood,' they said. His father had been the same before him. But they were the Bonneys—scions of one of the oldest, proudest Southern families—gifted, beautiful, irresistible, and everybody forgave them. They were never criminal, only immoral. She, your mother, adored him, and she forgave him again and again—until the day he forgot to sue for forgiveness; until he began to ignore her; until he openly ignored the marriage bond—and all the world knew. And one day he never came back—he had finally sailed away to Europe with another woman. Then she secured a divorce. . . . Lillian! Lillian—think of her—and the years! Please don't smile like that."

"I am not smiling—like that." The hand pressing Edith's seemed to grow heavier, but the white face looking into hers smiled on in a strange, detached, comprehending way. "And then?" she asked, so low that the sound was scarcely audible.

"He died, shortly after, in Sicily."

"She never told me."

"Oh, Lillian, why?"

"No doubt, she knew—why."

"Do you?"

"I—why do you ask that?"

"I don't know. You look as if you knew something. Lillian dear, forgive me."

"I thank you." She removed her hold and they both arose.

Edith put her arm gently about her.

"Dear, don't let it hurt you. It

happened so long ago—it's all finished and done."

"Of course, Edith."

"And quite outside your life. It has nothing to do with you, Lillian. Everybody knows how lovely you are. No one thinks of him—only of your noble mother. Forget it."

"I will. I do. Today is Adam's birthday—I must think of ordering dinner." She puckered her brow in wifely concern. She seemed to be leading Edith away from her and the ugly revelation, and when finally the girl did leave it was with a vision of a slight, lovely young thing deeply engrossed in evolving a birthday menu.

Mechanically, but punctiliously, Lillian went about her household duties, giving her orders so clearly to the willing little maid, directing everything so surely to completion and success, that Nora's feet and hands flew blithely at her bidding.

And at last she found herself alone in her sitting-room, the door locked, and Lillian Wynne, Patricia Bonney's masterpiece, the perfect wife, the dutiful housekeeper, the domestic economist, the innocent, pretty idealist and poet, securely barred out.

In her stead stood a woman in mental disarray, her head thrown back in scoffing defiance, the glee of freedom in her eyes, the smile of knowledge on her lips.

She knew "why."

"I have the right." All her blood proclaimed that she had come into her own. She laughed knowingly, looking scornfully about her as upon broken, puerile bonds.

She made a step toward her desk, then, with a sudden skip like a young girl, she ran to it, knelt down, and, unlocking the drawer, began rummaging in its depths. Presently, with a low laugh of victory, she drew forth a compact, typewritten manuscript and sat down on the floor to read.

She hunched herself together, covering the work with her arms as if to hide it from the light. It had been her one free adventure into the world that is, as she had glimpsed it in those

mad, protesting moments of which she had always been so ashamed—this literary, mythical flight which, until now, she had kept locked from the world and even from herself. But now she knew "why"—and she had "the right." She would see of what stuff her hidden self was made. She almost chuckled over her sense of oneness with the secret pages as she began to read.

And she was one with what she read—with its elemental truth, its masculine intrepidity, its joy of living, its wild scorn for the established, its sublimation of the individual—its pure, pagan power. The blood bounded madly through her, flushing her cheeks, starring her eyes, leaping in her muscles, like a call to reckless, buoyant adventure.

"And I was ashamed of you!" she laughed inwardly. "Why, you are great—great!" She flung back her head and her loosely knotted hair fell about her in all its tawny splendor. By a quick association of ideas, she put up her hand to the daguerreotype where she had placed it on the top of the desk, and snapped it open.

"Well, you—you father—you devil," she mutely apostrophized, poring over its already intimate beauty, "it's yours, isn't it? Yours—and mine. You claim me in it, don't you?—as you have always claimed me—in spite of Her. I am yours—as you are mine. In the secret hours you have sought me and found me out—for you could not let me go. Oh, great and wonderful are the laws of men, and always She strove to lead me in them. But before law was, was *The Law*—which is nature—and you are my father evermore—you who have brought me into this world of rule and line. And for all that I am whereby I am out of order, lawless, true—I hold you responsible. For now I know what and why I am. I am your child, Richard Bonney—yours only—your own illegitimate child."

The sudden, strange conclusion to her battling, pounding thoughts sent her roused imagination galloping.

With a swift movement she arose, gathered up the scattered manuscript, pressed it evenly into shape, thrust pen in ink and, with mind still afire, affixed a name—Elizabeth R. Bonney.

It looked up at her knowingly; she stared down at it, dumfounded. For the handwriting was not her own. Large, bold, free, it was the very antithesis of Lillian Bonney's small, dainty script.

She laughed in suppressed hysteria, glanced nervously over her shoulder. Her hand still held the pen, but moveless. "The Brontë sisters—the Bonney sisters!" she repeated irresponsibly again and again, her eyes fastened upon, learning, as if for further use, the phenomenon of the psychic handwriting. Then, to prove its verity, immediate action succeeding flashing thought, she sat down and wrote a note to the editor of a certain famous little weekly which, among a few brilliant editorials, published, with every issue, a novelette, sometimes masterly, sometimes only iconoclastic, sometimes only bizarre—always artistic. Triumphant she saw that the involuntary disguise persisted. She would send a post-office address later, she thought, when she would have secured it. Meanwhile, as though delay were fatal, she bound up and addressed the manuscript, and proceeded to make a hasty street toilet.

Shod as with the speed of an Atalanta, but leaving no track behind, she reached a remote post-office station, wonderfully unobserved—and the die was cast.

"I'm after wondering," said Nora, opening the door for her, "do yez pack the salt in first, or the ice?"

"Let's consult the cook-book," said Mrs. Wynne, all concern, following her into the kitchen.

Adam Wynne, in the light of the thirty-five candles with which his wife had gaily decorated his birthday cake, in the glow of her unflickering charm and grace peeping from behind a Bonney candlestick, looked thankfully upon her smiling contentment, and swallowing an unbidden thought

with his last mouthful, heartily pronounced it all "bully."

The theatre harmoniously rounded out the spirit of festivity.

"And tomorrow is here," she commented, looking down at Adam's watch open on the dresser the while he conjugally unhooked her bodice fastened up the back. "And Cinderella must drop her silk and satin and gay gauds."

"One—can't always—stay—put," tugged Adam, having reached the belt line.

The phrase struck Lillian as humorous. "Lo—only the good children always stay put," she sighed deeply. "And there are so few good children nowadays."

II

MISS ELIZABETH R. BONNEY,
P. O. Box 24, Station C.

DEAR MISS BONNEY:

I have ventured to offer you my personal congratulations on "Mere Woman." It has not only swept the consideration of every other story into the background, but it has literally swept the editorial staff off its stolid seat and back into the reading-chair. As, no doubt, the secretary has apprised you, we have done an unprecedented thing in substituting your story for one long since decided upon for our next issue but one. It is difficult to formulate the effect of your strange gem. At once spiritual and materialistic in its tendency, it is the spirit of the times—I mean the life-principle of all time—epitomized. The copy-books tell us, "Dare to be true!" But who dares—absolutely—while the instinct of self-preservation is the shibboleth to life? Yet you have dared so brilliantly I could almost think it done blindly. Who are you? What are you? I have fared far and would fare farther with Elizabeth Bonney.

OWEN MARCHMONT.

No, it was clear Lillian Wynne could no longer "stay put." The note excited her curiously; it flattered a side of her which, being hidden, had never been flattered before. For the esthetic, the softly poetic in her, she had had her full meed, but with this first recognition of her intellectual power came so strong a sense of breadth and completion her very soul seemed to put on

new features and to look back and down upon her hitherto little known ego with contemptuous superiority. At the same time she experienced a feverish joy in the possession of this unknown literary admirer. The note was typewritten and hid the man as behind a screen. But the name had attracted her notice several times at the foot of certain rawly blunt, yet oddly illuminating critiques in the columns of *The Lantern*, and she felt a sort of stolen-sweet excitement in being thus addressed by one who, though a comparative newcomer in the field of criticism, had raised no small whirlwind of curiosity among the elect of the reading public.

It was two nights later, when Adam had repaired to his office with his usual expressions of regret, that Lillian Wynne answered the note in the spirit of Elizabeth Bonney. The house lay silent about her, and with clandestine bravery and tentative daring she ventured, aided by the dæmonic handwriting:

DEAR MR. MARCHMONT:

I am nobody—I am everybody. I love a compliment and I love those who compliment me, and so I thank you. If you have fared far with Elizabeth Bonney the writer, then you must know her well, for she has hidden herself behind no pretty veil of convention, nor found refuge behind any pretty, protective symbolism. What have you made of her?

ELIZABETH BONNEY.

She laughed as she cunningly ended with her reply-provoking question. She had no intention of annihilating the incarnation of Elizabeth Bonney, and she clung tenaciously to this slender avenue of escape from inanition.

She fed upon the thought of his reply as she might have indulged in a surreptitious intoxicant in the milk of her simple life with Adam. That she was safe from detection she felt sure, and the harmlessness of the incipient correspondence made her intrepidity impatient for something further.

In the meanwhile she received from the business office a munificent cheque which she carefully hid away. "Blood

money," she dubbed it meaningly, turning the key of the door upon it. "We can't put any of that in Adam Wynne's porridge."

When the day of publication arrived she had become so accustomed to her duplicity that Adam's unexpected commentary brought no tremor to her countenance.

"Look here," he said, laying the periodical before her and pointing to the author's name. "Who is this Elizabeth R. Bonney? Any relation of yours?"

She looked at the name with questioning curiosity, but, in her double self-consciousness, she could feel Elizabeth grinning in the background while she shook her head and raised wide, sweet eyes to his. "You know how bare our family tree is," she said. "But what is it? What has she written? Does it bear any resemblance—any hint of kinship to me or my work?"

Adam threw back his head with a laugh. "As black to white," he returned, drawing the paper from her and flinging it carelessly to the other end of the room.

"Then you've read it?"

"Oh, I tasted it as I taste everything. Pretty strong stuff—not exactly angel-food. Good for inebriates or the immune—like me. That fellow Marchmont—theatric sort of name—has written a lot of rot about it."

"Let me see what he says," she ordered idly, holding out a curious hand, and Adam fetched the paper to her.

Lillian read.

"It must be very—unusual," she said simply, looking up as she finished.

"But *she* says it's usual," laughed Adam musingly. "Well, at any rate, it's clear she has never met any nice, comfortably-minded people like you and me—or, if she has, she has forgotten us. Let's be just as sneery as she." He drew the paper from her fingers, keeping his hand over hers as if in protection from its malign influence. "You'd hate it, Lillian," he added seriously.

She laughed indifferently as she let it go, but she tempered her thought of Adam with indulgence. "What's Hecuba to him, or he to Hecuba?" she smiled gently in her sleeve.

The teeming Western city was resting in the Midsummer calm. All Lillian's little world had hied itself to country home or Summer resort, and the hours lay idle on her hands. Adam had said they would take a holiday later when he could manage his increase of work so that it need not mortgage his nights, and, with wifely devotion, Lillian had refused all invitations to leave him, even for a week-end. It had been Mrs. Bonney's creed that "a wife's place is at her husband's side," unless necessity intervened, and she had enforced the dogma with such wealth of proof that Lillian regarded the observance of it as one of her unspoken marriage vows. So, while true to the letter of her training, she gave little heed to her moral disaffection. Since the incident of Edith Page's revelation had happened to come just at the "psychologic moment," like a jack-in-the-box, with all its handmaidens of time and circumstance in line, who was Patricia Bonney's idealistic creation to pit her puny strength against such a combination of forces? Lillian Bonney Wynne was, but so also was Elizabeth Bonney. And the latter had come to life full-grown, with the glow and irresistible tide of Summer to give her sway. Lillian stepped lightly out of her way.

And Owen Marchmont's strong oracular sentences concerning "Mere Woman," with their extraordinary praises, repeated themselves over and over to her thirsting soul, and she kept them in her consciousness as if for sustenance. "I should die without them," thought Elizabeth Bonney.

But she was unprepared for the peculiar note which followed on the heels of the review:

E. R. B.:

You ask me what I make of Elizabeth Bonney. This: She is the phantom happiness we daily bury alive, consciously or

unconsciously, for the public good, and daily, secretly, dig up again for our individual need. She is the thrill of the world—the *je-ne-sais-quoi* in the charm of existence—its delirious joy—and its evanescence. In a word, she is Eternal Self as it was in the youth of the world before it had a past to frighten it—as it is, *sub rosa*—as it must ever be. Do you ask for more? Then know that when I think of Elizabeth Bonney it is of Thee that works behind the veil, as well as of the veil we call your work. Tell me, can there be any connection between your name and that of that sweet young singer, the puritan Lillian Bonney? You see I conclude with a question—because I am a man and curious, and because a question begs an answer.

O. M.

If, for a moment, she trembled over the reading of his concluding question, she was unconscious of it. The flirtation, though of a purely literary, impersonal origin, was assuming piquancy, was verging on the personal note, and Elizabeth Bonney advanced to the tilt with bold front and pulses dancing to the music of adventure.

She sat down, quite conscious of her daring and, with an inscrutable smile, deliberately wrote the following:

O. M.:

I am Lillian Bonney's illegitimate sister. Does a note of harshness ring through that reply? I am to her what skulking night is to the radiant day. She, my little sister, ignores me. Keep the secret from her—with me. Will you?

E. R. B.

She had voluntarily lifted the affair out of the lightness of a chance flirtation. She had given it the substance of a serious confidence which bound them, in a fashion, together. She had entrusted a family secret to a mere stranger. That the secret was in the shape thus presented only the wild fabrication of her own imagination detracted nothing from its verity to Elizabeth Bonney. She was willing to assume, in that nebulous environment, the responsibility of its creation and the consequences of her temerity. And there was small danger of her ever breaking the pact of silence between the woman seen and the woman unseen.

When the response came she took it calmly, without surprise, as the natural

outcome of what she had wittingly provoked:

E. R. B.:

Without voucher, you have given me your trust. I shall be worthy of it. You—and I—shall shield Lillian Bonney from—what? Knowledge? Let us call it that. And let us put her name carefully away where it deserves to lie—among the lavender-scented memories that bind us to our simpler selves. . . .

"How tenderly he mentions her—almost as if he knew her," she thought, with a curious pang. "And how he separates her from contact with—her sister." Elizabeth Bonney was jealous! But, as she read on, the irony faded from her lips:

I am going to do a commonplace, a trite thing. I am going to ask you for your picture. Won't you trust me further—dear?

O. M.

Had she asked for this?—expected it? She did not know. She knew only that she was satisfied—yet secure.

Her answer speeded as on the wing of impulse:

O. M.:

No. And evermore no. You may not have my picture. What am I to you? A slender handful of impersonal correspondence. You have glimpsed me behind the mask—spiritually better, psychically. Now picture me, by the same set of instincts—physically—as I have pictured you.

E. R. B.

She would not draw him closer—yet. She could not let him go. He had stirred something within her, more vital than either vanity or coquetry, but she knew her words revealed nothing more—nothing less.

His reply left her helpless, convicted.

E. R. B.:

You say, in your story, "Motive alone sins or saints the act." If this is your belief, good. If not, then all you have written is a thing of sound and fury, signifying nothing, and you have made a mockery of Accepted Good, and substituted for it a lie which you cannot or will not support. Are you weak, a coward, or only a coquette? Neither, in the test, I know. Then let us fling all this mystery and literariness aside. You are not, you will not prove, the vain, cold-blooded creature your unrevoked denial would prove you. You know you have stirred—*me*. I am not speaking of my mental interest in you or my critical joy in your work—not speaking of Owen Marchmont in his literary capacity. I am speaking of the man whose

imagination you have roused to the fever point of action, whether deliberately or carelessly I do not care. The request for your picture was merely tentative—it had to come to this. You have encouraged me to this degree—this *demand*: It is you I want to know—you, Elizabeth Bonney the woman. I can be satisfied with no less. It must be that, or nothing. I will not stoop to ferret you out from any wall behind which you have intrenched yourself, neither will I subject you to the indignity of personal pursuit. I await your pleasure. Let me come to you or you to me. Everything shall be as you wish.

O. M.

She sat stunned. It was too strong even for Elizabeth Bonney who, after all, was rooted only in air, was so conclusively a thing of hothouse growth that she shriveled at the first sign of a hand put out to touch her. Lillian, horrified, severe, sprang to her assistance. The noxious billet was thrust hastily and securely from sight.

"We shall make strawberry jam to-day, Nora," she announced somewhat breathlessly, appearing suddenly upon the kitchen threshold.

"But there ain't no more strawberries to be had," exclaimed Nora in surprise, wondering over her mistress's pallor and absent-mindedness.

Lillian flushed. "I meant blackberry," she explained lightly. "I shall send for the fruit at once. And, Nora, tomorrow we shall begin to clean closets."

Nora turned upon her, arms akimbo. "In the middle of Summer, mum!" she protested.

"A moth is a moth at any season of the year. I saw one in my bedroom this morning."

She turned away, singing lightly. Lightness, after all, was the keynote to all sane living. Had she been guilty of emotional exaggeration? She would forget it all, at once. To cast lingering, regretful looks behind was the device of the shiftless and the vice of the ineffectuals. An episode is to Destiny as Time to Eternity. All of which semi-conscious reasoning under Lillian's singing proves that she had gone to school and studied that branch of mathematics called proportion.

So she set to work to enact the rule. She bathed her eyes anew with devo-

tion to the legitimate and they seemed to acquire startling brilliancy from the bathing. When night brought Adam, his personality appeared to possess disconcerting changes. How derelict she must have been not to have noticed the unusual sharpness of his always sharp-cut face, and the apparent effort with which he kept up his incessant flow of raillery. And—was it guilty conscience?—or did he in truth withhold himself, withdrawing, by ever so subtle a difference, from his usual debonaire tenderness?

"What sort of work do you do nights?" she demanded abruptly.

More startling than any change of color could have proved was the light mask which fell like a shifting scene over his expression at her peremptory question. "Going into the railroad business?" he asked. "Interested in our suit for right of way? Or do you want me to give it up right away?"

"Yes, if it's going to avert a wreck."

"Wreck? Any signals flying, madam?"

"All along the track of the local tonight. Slow down, Adam."

"How? We run by schedule, you know, and we're bound to make time—or be fired."

"No fear of that, Adam?"

"Lillian?"

"You're not going down tonight?"

"I told you I was, this morning."

"But if I ask you not to?"

He scanned her face quickly and seemed to change pose. "That's fair inducement," he said, with a swift smile. "'Thou knowest too well my heart is to thy rudder tied by the strings.' But what's more—to bait me?"

"Shall we go out?"

"'Nowhere to go but out'? You'll put me out if you take me out, but I'm not a bear—I'll bear it."

"Dreadful! Well, you may lie down and I'll read to you."

He shook his head in slow but emphatic disapproval. "Going—going"—he droned in the tones of an auctioneer. "In another minute, madam, unless you raise your bid, this bright, particular gem will have——"

"I'll sing for you."

"Sold! 'Take me, you're welcome; no extra charge.'"

Well, if Adam's conversation was nothing but a mosaic of quotations cemented by puns, a little forbearance made it more endurable. And he *meant* it pleasantly enough in his dear simplicity. Lillian was in a penitent mood and not disposed to prick the bubble in search or despair of something more substantial.

So he lay on the couch behind her, the smoke of his cigar curling blissfully about his head, spirit-lamp alight and ash-tray on the stand at his elbow, while she sat at the piano singing as best she could, and though a connoisseur might have detected the lack of spontaneity in the usual expressiveness of her pretty voice, she gave no sign of fatigue, going through her ballads new and old, glad to stop when he should bid, glad to continue while he gave no sign.

"He is asleep," she thought as the last, lingering strains of "Oh, believe me," died in sweet sentimentality from her lips, and she turned quietly about to him.

But he was not asleep. He lay outstretched, his cigar burnt to a stump, his arms clasped over his head, his gaze, wide and still, upon the ceiling. He gave no sign that he had noticed the silence.

She moved softly to his side. "Fools rush in," she apologized playfully.

He sprang upright, drawing her down beside him. Was it her own self-conscious imagination, or had his hold a firmer, graver possessiveness than he had been wont to show? Suddenly he drew his arm almost roughly from her.

"Lillian," he began hurriedly, his eyes bent upon the carpet, "I've been wondering how I could break it to you gently—and I can't think. But it might as well come out first as last. I—I've decided that we must separate."

For a moment a terrific ringing in her ears, as if all the blood in her body had rushed in alarm to her head, par-

alyzed response. Then, "Is this a joke?" she asked.

He glanced up quickly at her tone. Her face was deathly pale.

"For heaven's sake!" he cried, seizing her wrists in consternation. "Of course it's a joke. Dear, what is the matter with you?"

"I don't know. But I wish you would stop it."

"Stop what?"

"That inveterate habit of joking on every and any subject. I—I can't stand it."

"I thought so. That's why I spoke. Why, Lillian! I am only speaking of your going up to the Pages' bungalow for a few days. Mr. Page was in the office today, and insists on your coming this week-end to stay as long as you will. He said Wilfred was fretting for you and they all beg you to come."

"Yes, I had a round-robin from Mrs. Page, Edith and Wilfred this morning."

"Of course you will go?"

"Why 'of course'?"

"Because I need a change."

"Then you are coming, too?"

"I! The gods, alas, forbid. I mean a change of color."

"Now, Adam, do speak straight prose. Color? What do you mean by that?"

"My lady's color. 'Tis pale. It likes me not. Also, rings should be worn on the fingers, not under the eyes. Besides, your senses are growing dull—you can no longer scent a joke. You start at a word as though it were a mouse. In short, there's no reason why you shouldn't go, and every reason why you should."

"I think not, dear."

He stood up, strode to the other end of the room, fingered the music on the piano, and veered about. "Go now and I'll come later," he said, a frown creasing his open brow. "I wish you would stop putting me in the centre of every question—like a scarecrow. I don't like it. Do you hear me, Lillian?"

"Yes, I hear you." She smiled,

wide-eyed, up at him; it was so unheard of a departure for Adam to bully. And again she noticed that sharpening of the square-cut jaw which spoke to her like a rebuke. Surely he needed a rest. Her indifference vanished. "If I go Thursday, will you come Saturday evening?"

"Thursday? That's tomorrow." His knit brows relaxed. "Come along upstairs—I'll help you pack." He moved to turn off the lights.

"You seem very anxious to be rid of me, Adam."

He pretended not to hear the wistful little ring in her voice or note the appealing protest of the slender young figure which made no move to rise.

"I am," he said stoutly. "Now don't miss the train, Lillian. Get up, or you'll be left, darling."

"But you haven't answered my question."

"What question?"

"About your coming."

"Oh, I'll follow the leader, never fear—if nothing happens to prevent."

"What could happen?"

"What! In these fast days of motor-cars and——"

"Adam, I don't want to go."

The light left his face. "Well," he acquiesced in grave brevity.

She scanned his face uncertainly. "You are queer tonight," she said, a quaver of weariness breaking the wonder in her voice.

"Let's not discuss it further. I have no intention of driving you from me. I only thought that, loving beautiful Edgelyffe as you do, I might induce you to go and have a good time with the Pages. It's deadly dull in town just now. But for some occult reason——"

"There! Did you never have a presentiment, Adam?"

"Presentiment? Yes—afterward."

She laughed shortly. "Better have it before and act upon it, don't you think, honey?"

"Presentiment of what?"

"Something—anything."

He laughed, coming gaily over to her. "Joan of Arc heard voices, you

know," he said, holding out his hands to her. "Today they diagnose her as a neurasthenic, and if you don't hurry off you'll be in like case. I'll stake—anything but yourself—you're mistaken."

"Well," she finally yielded, rising as his arm bid. "But remember, the responsibility is yours."

"Responsibility be hanged! Who is my lady's keeper? You, I or the Pages?"

He turned off the lights, and, in boyish spirits, raced her up the stairs.

III

EDITH, in the runabout at the roadside, stood up and signaled wildly with her whip as the slight, gray-clad figure appeared upon the platform. Lillian spied her at once and hurried down and across to her.

"There's John at your elbow—give him your check and he'll attend to your baggage. Awfully glad you're here, Lillian. Hop in."

In another second she was up beside her.

"But you do look like a 'nut-brown mayde,' Edith," she observed as the horse was smartly turned, "all in that tan complexion and khaki uniform. It's vastly becoming. How is everybody?"

"All well but Wilfred, who needs—you. He's as mopey as an old stick, but he'll brighten up at sight of you. He has been reading your poems and is hungry for the poet. But you! You need a deep layer of mountain dust to take that clean, starved, city look off of you. Whatever have you been up to?"

"Down to, you mean. Oh, look—the maples!"

The horse trotted on. The westering sun filtered down a golden shimmer into the narrow woodland trail bordered here by a still stretch of graceful maples, radiant in their glowing late-Summer foliage. A bird called, flying. A rabbit flashed across the path. The breath of the great woods was rife with the fragrance of

dog-roses tangled up and peeping out like curious little pink children at the feet of their dark, overshadowing elders.

Edith, silent a moment, laughed joyously as she turned the horse to ascend the denser twilight groves of laurel, pine and madrone. "You're here in character, Lillian," she said. "The woods are full of material for you—ideal, spiritual, human and—ah!"

A horseman, galloping lightly, flashed between the trees of the cross-road and disappeared up the winding trail. Lillian caught a fleeting glimpse of a dark, still face.

"Who was that?" she whispered delightedly. "Launcelot?"

"Yes. How did you know?" returned the girl, turning her merry brown eyes full upon her, and then urging the horse to a livelier pace.

"I know because everything is touched with romance here. But who is he—really?"

"Ask Wilfred. I don't know him. You noticed we didn't bow." She laughed again a mischievous, mystifying laugh, and Lillian shook her arm, but could not shake her teasing silence, and a moment later they were discussing realities, winding higher and higher up the narrow, wooded heights, through dim, unexpected roads cut through the very heart of the forest. And presently they approached the mesa and caught a view of gleaming blue waters below, where the woods ran down to meet the sea.

Edith let the horse amble and turned toward her companion, enjoying her unrestrained pleasure.

"You were made for such places, Lillian," she commented.

"No, such places were made for me," murmured the other in mock majesty.

"Impudence! I mean you find your better self in scenes like these—not in the people and things we were just discussing—not in material, city things."

"What do you mean by my better self, child?"

"Child! Oh, that married superiority! I didn't mean Adam. Ask Wilfred." She turned the horse up the home path.

They came suddenly upon the house, showing its shingled sides here and there through the trees, its broad, verandaed front up to the eyes in honeysuckles and climbing roses.

Edith gave a long, bird-like whistle, and Mrs. Page, her silvery hair gleaming in the glow of the setting sun, came forward to the edge of the steps, holding out welcoming hands. Lillian was up the terrace in a half-minute, while Edith drove round to the stable.

Mrs. Page drew her guest through the open door straight into the great, raftered living-room, where Wilfred stood waiting.

"How is the Boy?" smiled Lillian, hurrying to him.

"Happy," he returned in a short, expressive way peculiar to himself. "Enjoy the drive up, Lil?"

He dropped her hands and turned to his low wicker chair facing the wide brick fireplace, where, for his comfort, glowing logs and sputtering, fragrant pine-cones made a little world of dreams. Lillian's eyes dwelt lovingly on the fine spirituality of his thin young face.

"Did I enjoy the drive? Ask Edith," she laughed as that young woman entered and pitched her hat with perfect aim at the window-seat.

"Come up and take your things off, dear," suggested Mrs. Page in her soft, slow voice.

"Ask Edith what?" interposed the girl, roughing her brother's hair in playful tenderness.

"Whether I enjoyed the drive up."

"Did she! We met Launcelot, Wil; at least she took him for Launcelot, and I couldn't undeceive her, and I told her to ask you about him."

"Launcelot?"

"You know." She nodded mischievously toward the south windows.

"Oh," laughed Wilfred, understanding. "Do you mean Marchmont?"

Something contracted in Lillian's

throat while she listened in smiling interest.

"Of course. Wasn't she quick to recognize him? Did you know he was in hiding here, Lil?"

Lillian slowly shook her head in denial; her eyes questioned.

"Thereby hangs a tale, Lillian," he answered. "Better wait to hear it."

"No, now," commanded Edith. "It won't take a second. Did you ever hear of Owen Marchmont?"

"The writer?"

"Exactly. Well, that's him. He owns the most glorious stretch of woods in all the mountains round. Come over here." She beckoned her to the window. "See that dark, shadowy glade off there to the right? Well, if you'd walk down a few feet you'd see placards on every tree proclaiming it 'Private Property—no trespassers allowed.' Somewhere in the depths is his house, but no one dares venture on its solitary confines as the lord of the manor—which is only a cabin—proudly ignores the gentry round. Only, Wilfred ventured the other day, and—continue, son."

"It was taking chances, rather," Wilfred proceeded with the tale, his soft, languid voice, so like his mother's, brightened by a reminiscent pleasure, "but the hour demanded it. I had escaped my keepers and was bent on adventure and, seeing the placards, the die was cast. I plunged into the forest. Some day when the poetic mood is on me I'll describe its wonderful beauty or, better still, when we hear the ogre is away, we'll steal a march on him and you shall see—what you shall see. Well, I wandered on into the glorious depths, but found, to my discomfiture, that body cried louder than soul, and I laid me down to rest under a green-wood tree and fell sound asleep.

"I was awakened by—I don't know what—the sense of a presence, I suppose—and looked up to find the man standing near, leaning on his horse, making a picture, to be sure, and scowling down on me as though I were the seven plagues all in one. I sprang up, confused, apologetic, stammering,

almost afraid! And the man continued to glower at me without a word, till, in sheer desperation and retaliation, I turned and, without further parley, stalked haughtily away. But here comes the tragic, sad part. I left my book, your poems, 'Songs of Triumph,' behind me—and that's where he gets his innings. I wrote his royal highness a courteous note requesting him to return the book, if found, through the general post-office or as he would, but he has seen fit to ignore my appeal—the dour wretch!—and I want my book."

"My book!" echoed Lillian in assumed indignation. "What is the matter with him—playing the solitary in this grand fashion? Sun-touched?"

"Who's to tell? It's possible, judging by some of his written enthusiasms. The girls—Edith and Maude Chamberlain—tell themselves he is nursing a wounded heart and they are ready to play nurse—trained nurses, too, by George!—if he'll only look at 'em. You see he is the only man of mystery in these parts, and they've made him the repository of all their Summer hopes and fancies. They call him Launcelot—for looks; but I tell them Elaine didn't get much fun out of her dream."

"You're jealous, boy, and don't know it," quoth Edith scornfully, drawing Lillian toward the door, "and you are talking of the Dark Ages. Come upstairs, Lil, and I'll tell you how we modern maids stalk our big game."

Up in the twilight of the wide, low-ceilinged room she told a merry tale of wild gallops and mad chases over heights and downs after the elusive knight. "Such fun! Neither of us has spoken a word to him and we've a bet on—that is, the one who gets the first word from him will send the other a box of candy for consolation. There isn't another sign of human interest around, and what's a landscape without a man in the foreground to a girl in Summer mood? But he is of the vanishing order—here today, gone tomorrow, and we always come upon

him so unexpectedly, we lose our heads. But you can help the fun along."

"I!"

"You. I count on you to make the first charge—we're under oath to speak to him only when spoken to, and—I'm dying to send the candy to Maude."

"How old are you?"

"Oh, any silly age. We're up in the woods, back to nature, and it's Summer, honey, so make up your mind to be happy."

She laughed, arranging Lillian's belt in the back, and just then the latter, looking in the mirror, caught sight of Mrs. Page entering the room, a telegram in her hand, her face moved and pale. As she came in, closing the door quietly behind her, Lillian veered hastily about.

"What is it, Cousin Marcia," she demanded, taking a quick step toward her.

"Why, dear, nothing to disturb you," returned Mrs. Page in soft surprise of her perturbation, laying a quieting hand upon her wrist and turning a firm face to her daughter. "A message from your father, Edith," she announced without extra words. "He has had one of his attacks of heart failure, and I am going to town on the night train, and——"

"I am going with you," added Edith as decidedly, taking the paper from her. "He is at home?"

"Yes, but——"

"All the servants except Martha are here, and I am going with you. Oh—Lillian!"

"Don't think of me—please—except as being here with Wilfred."

"I thought of that," admitted Mrs. Page, the soft-spoken, now all swift thought and action. There is very little to do for him, but I am very glad you are here to do it. The doctor is sure the worst has been averted; his lungs are sound, so you need not worry about him, and we'll be home just as soon as his father is better—in three or four days, I hope. Meanwhile, I know, you'll be a mother to him." She gave

her a few directions with exactitude, and Lillian, reassuringly, accepted the responsibility.

Thus it fell out that, two hours later, Lillian, feeling like a plaything in the entertainment of the powers, was left sole mistress of the bungalow and guardian of its delicate young lord, within a stone's throw of the great woods which bore in their depths the very heart of the vague romance from which she had just fled.

IV

THE morning had hushed and hung the woods in a veil as of sacred beauty, making of them a place of worship.

Lillian let the paper fall idly to the step beneath her. She, too, felt the languor, which had weighted Wilfred's eyelids, creeping over her limbs and senses. The lad, resting in the hammock after their pleasant early stroll, had fallen fast asleep. Something in his attitude, in the contour of his sleeping, dreaming face under the canopy of the high, pagoda-like top branches of the pine-tree in which the veranda seemed hung, suggested Endymion.

And, with the thought, came its associate, Wilfred asleep "under a greenwood tree," and the dark, still face of Owen Marchmont looking down upon him, satyr-fashion. Her limbs lost their languor, her heart laughed impishly within her. She was alone, no sound or sight of waking human being was near; she was young, it was still morning, and this beautiful detached hour was hers.

Wilfred was sleeping peacefully. Lillian stepped lightly down the veranda steps.

Upon the yellow leaves carpeting the dim glade the sun cast here and there a yellow, ghostly finger of light. Lillian passed, the seeming spirit of the woods incarnate, down through its long aisle of shadows. Her dress was white, over her shoulder rested the white stem of a pale green parasol, which shaded her hatless golden head as leaf shades its flower. The dim aisle widened presently to the forest.

She stepped into primeval grandeur. The marvelous redwoods rose seemingly to the skies; through their giant brown trunks and widespread high arms the luminous azure dipped down, a shimmering protecting curtain. The soft, warm air was freighted with the pungent fragrance of the deep woods-breath. Underfoot, ankle-deep, lay the dry, sere leaves without a rustle. Awed, with eyes uplifted in wonder, dwarfed to fairy proportions under these heaven-aspiring shades, she moved, a noiseless dream figure, wandering into elysium—the strange virgin forest, quietly awaiting the coming of man.

So she passed down the far-stretching arcades, in sensuous rapture, forgetful of her venture, till without warning of sound or sight she found herself gazing into Owen Marchmont's face a yard away.

She stood still in the golden shadow, the green parasol still framing the dainty beauty of her face, while he, dark, saturnine, stood in her path apparently holding back for her the limb of the tree against which he leaned. His corduroyed, high-booted legs were crossed, his flannel-shirt carelessly showed the strong, sun-browned throat, the cowboy hat was pushed back from the shaggy, overhanging brow—a man, thick-set, neither tall nor short, of domineering expression and attitude.

The blood rushed in a startled flood to Lillian's face, but, receding as suddenly, left her pathetically pale. The man continued to gaze, wordless, motionless, but the slightly provocative light in his waiting eyes bespoke neither anger nor impatience. Primeval silence, primeval isolation breathed about them, breathed into the woman's consciousness. She had come as Elizabeth Bonney; now, of a sudden, the inherited, conventional instincts of self-preservation rushed to the rescue, and Lillian Wynne recovered herself.

"I know I am trespassing," she said in a sweet, cold voice, "but I am looking for a book"—her eye had already

discovered that he held it in his hand, finger inserted between the pages as though he had been interrupted in his reading—"a book of mine, which was lost here a few days ago."

Marchmont deliberately raised the slender blue-covered volume, opening it to the fly-leaf. "Do you happen to be," he asked, reading in rough sonority, "one 'Wilfred Randall Page'?"

Lillian suppressed a swift smile. She was more at ease now; the man did not know her, and, strangely enough, the tip of her finger had sought the inner curve of her wedding-ring. "No," she replied naturally, "but Wilfred Randall Page happens to be my friend." She held out an imperious hand.

"Ah," returned the man reflectively, "your friend, then, happens to show very good taste in choosing his poetry."

"I shall tell him of your appreciation. And since you have evidently read the book, will you kindly return it?"

The man kept his eyes steadily fastened upon the beautiful face, ignoring the outstretched hand. "To the owner," he answered briefly, the expression in his eyes somewhat softening the curtness of tone and words.

"I—I think I may claim ownership to the book," she said hastily. "It is, in a way, my own."

"Indeed?"

"So will you kindly give it to me?"

"I do not recognize your claim to the book. I see no other name. I need further proof. Are you, perhaps, the silent partner?"

"Hardly silent—being the author." There was no reason for withholding that fact from Owen Marchmont, the literary critic.

She was amply rewarded for the avowal. The imperturbable, steady gaze vanished. A quick, glad light sprang into the masterful dark eyes; he took a step toward her, hat in hand. "You are Lillian Bonney?" he questioned, his deferential voice as aglow as his eyes.

"I am Lillian Bonney Wynne now—Mrs. Adam Wynne."

"What!"

"Sir?"

"Pardon—pray pardon me. I have been most rude to you, I know—but I took you for a wood nymph at first and—manners fled. I happen to be Owen Marchmont, a critic by profession. All things literary interest me. Your poems—greatly. It is not the first time I have read them, but the best time. I did not know Lillian Bonney was married—to—Adam Wynne."

She could not suppress her surprise of his evident surprise. "You know my husband?"

"Er—no; merely the name. I am more interested in—his wife."

The expression upon the "interested," interesting face was neither literary nor personal—it was simply emotive. But Lillian had herself well in hand and chose to ignore all but the obvious excuse for her lingering.

Her hand again insisted. "Will you deliver up the book now—to me?" she urged.

"This is an exquisite moment for me, Miss—Mrs. Wynne. You have given me many exquisite moments. The book happened to come into my hand—this time—when, had it been a friend, I would have cried to it for help. It is mine now—neither yours, nor Wilfred Randall Page's. In poor return, allow me to offer you the freedom of—this, my all." His hand swept the glorious surroundings. His voice was mellow with controlled eagerness, his head was bent slightly to her fair fragility; he still held his hat in hand in courtly fashion. "Will you explore it—with me?"

She turned slightly from him. "Thank you," she made answer without expression, scarcely knowing what she said. "It is a rare possession. But I can go no farther this morning. Good morning." She turned swiftly, cutting off any anticipated advance by the faint, but unmistakable, final inclination of her head, in dismissal.

Marchmont stood straight, watching the slight white figure until it had

passed from sight down the leaf-strewn golden shades.

She had forgotten the book, forgotten that she walked. She seemed to cover ground on the rapturous wing of girlhood. Her blood danced in the joy of the adventure, till it almost broke into song upon her lips. This, this indeed, was the man of the letters—substance and shadow were one; he did not belie his work. And she—ah, but he did not know that she was she. She laughed aloud at her own ambiguity.

But presently, dazed by her seemingly sudden arrival, she found herself up the veranda steps, Wilfred advancing leisurely toward her.

"Well," she greeted him breathlessly, "did you wake up?"

"I don't know," he answered slowly, a smile chasing the gravity of his lips. "To look at you makes me think I still see visions. Heavens! but you do look jolly fine. Where did you run to?"

She hesitated, but only for an imperceptible moment—the truth played too near her lips. "Into the Forest of Arden where I met your melancholy Jacques reading a book—your book—my book——"

"You did! What did he say?"

"He said, 'Finders, keepers!' You see I am empty-handed."

"The impudent brute! Did he treat you as cavalierly as he treated me?"

"N-no, I can't say he did. I tried to identify my claim to the book—and he invited me farther."

"And——?"

"And I came home—to you." Her eyes laughed, the little loves and graces dimpled about the scarlet curve of her lips, her face was softly flushed.

The boy's face suddenly reflected her color. "That's right. Don't," he said shortly.

"Why not, most reverend sir?"

"Because. A woman's reason, I know, so call it intuition. I hate that fellow somehow—the girls act like two such fools about him. I've had a long telegram from Edith."

He drew it from his pocket and held

it toward her with serious mien. A quieting hand passed over her buoyancy. She took it, and read:

Father was pretty bad, but is resting quietly now. Will be all right in two or three days. Mother done up. If Lillian will stay with you, shall stay here till we all go up—probably Monday. Let us know by wire. Will try to make Adam run up Sunday. Has Lillian met Launcelot? Let Guinevere remember Elaine. Hope you are well. Love.

EDITH.

"It is almost a letter," Lillian laughed, passing it back to him. "Edith must have her joke at any price, but it argues that your father is all right."

"Will you stay?"

"Of course. We'll send John to the village with the answer. But something tells me it is near lunch-time."

"Long past. Nice sort of custodian they've left me with!"

Promising future devotion, feeling all contrition in her irrepressible sense of happiness, she hurried him into the glass-enclosed dining-room, with its broad, sweeping outlook of blue waters through the etching arms of trees. All through the meal, under his persistent questioning, she gave him merrily absurd details of her meeting with "the wild man of the woods"—another designation which Wilfred added to their picturesque list—finally dropping the subject only upon Wilfred's proposing a wager—a hickory staff which he much desired, to an orchid for which she professed to be pining—that, before twenty-four hours should have passed, the book would come home, but, unlike Bo-peep's sheep, would bring its "tale" along with it.

"And now for your indoor siesta," she prescribed as they arose, "and a preliminary dose of the brown tonic."

"I'd like to pay you back in full for that," he said with a wry face. "But I suppose you've laid your plans for something particularly pleasant, by way of contrast."

"Well, guess."

"Oh, writing to that old Adam of yours, of course."

The day seemed suddenly to turn

dull, dark, wearisome. She raised her eyebrows as if in surprise of his power of divination—it was too much of a bore to answer.

But the suggestion rankled. The boy had taken it for granted that such would be the natural order of things, and it would have been if the disturbing interlude of the morning had not intervened. Now, sullenly, reluctantly, as if moved mechanically and against her will by some despotic power, her hand sought writing materials, and she sat down in a secluded corner of the grounds to write to her husband. The radiant beauty of the morning had vanished, the Summer woods bore to her now only a sense of heavy, impertinent intrusion and oppression.

Why must she? She had nothing to say to him. He knew she was well, safe. What folly these sentimental conventions! She supposed he would expect it. Well, let him expect! The mood was sinking deeper and Lillian was always the slave to her mood. She let her eyes gaze doggedly out through the trees—she had turned her back upon the beauty of the smiling water and the distant, inspiring hills.

"Will you explore it—with me?" The deference of his deep-toned voice had been unmistakable. He had addressed Lillian Bonney. There had been no Elizabeth present for him, except by association. Well, for the present, let it be only Lillian, the poet. Later, the revelation. It was not a rôle to be despised; it was, after all, very sweet, very lovely, very harmonious to time and place. At least, so he seemed to think. The thought softened her. She was Lillian Bonney, a something men turned to to worship, a something Owen Marchmont, now and here, would follow as—moth the flame?—no, as the mystic his vision until—

And that dim, distant Adam? Divinely gentle now, stooping as from a height compassionate to his need, the mood being upon her, she wrote:

DEAR "OLD ADAM" (as Wilfred calls you):
Edith, in her telegram today, said she

would try to induce you to come up Sunday, but I "hae me doots" of her success, and I seem all selfishness in these sweet do-nothing woods while you are toiling at your books in that tyrannic old office. Do you still go down nights? Do you notice the far-away look of that "still"?—and I have been gone only two days! But can't you relax a little—just for ducks instead of ducats? Try, for a change, and when you come— When are you coming? Of course you know, through Edith, the situation here, and I don't know how long I shall have to play big sister to Wilfred—probably only a day or two longer if dear Mr. Page continues to improve. It is a great playtime and when you come—as you *must*—you will leap like a roe or a young hart on the mountain—isn't that last after Adam Wynne's best manner?

Is Nora treating you well? Or do you miss your housekeeper? Wilfred and I are going to drive up to the Chamberlains' late this afternoon and I'll write you all the gossip—Maude is bound to be in communication with the social secret service—when next I write. At present I am just stupidly somnolent like the dreaming trees about me—I am in the laurel arbor—content to be and nothing more. Will your letter come to-night as *avant courier*?

I love you and so—leave you! A queer world, Adam dear.

LILLIAN.

There was no hypocrisy employed in the writing. She had written as she knew he liked to think of her, but, in truth, she was only that at that moment. She folded the letter in sweet pensiveness. Impressionable to auto-suggestion as only the deeply imaginative are, she wore the grace of Lillian Bonney, the idealist and poet, like a costume worn by right royal.

Wilfred, coming upon her not long after, thought he had never seen her more her own idealized self. In his own weakened, effeminatized condition, only the poetry of things appealed to him, and Lillian in this gentle phase but added to the sensuous harmony of their surroundings as they drove up the golden steeps and through the leafy shadows to the Chamberlain home farther up the heights.

Colonel Chamberlain, with a sense of the old romantic Southern spirit stirring his veins, under the spell of the grace of her presence, wandered away and brought back to her from a high bank a bunch of fairy-like ferns, as exquisite as an exquisite maiden, he said.

And the flattery only heightened her dream of self.

But Maude, brimming over with life and activity, looked at her doubtfully.

"I was going to ask you to tramp up Vision Mountain with me," she regretted, "but you look as if you'd be all in at the mere suggestion. Perhaps if you'd come upstairs and put on a tramping-suit of mine you'd look more fit. Won't you try it, Lil?"

"Not today, Maude. I've promised to be at my post for the rest of the day, and even if Wilfred would let me off I wouldn't feel up to the exertion. But where is Vision Mountain?"

"You strike the trail just beyond the first waterfall—wonderful trail, gorgeous view."

"You can fetch me a hickory staff when you go," sang out Wilfred. "It's the only place you'll find one."

"I'm afraid you'll be sending to town for an orchid instead," she retorted, with a musing shake of the head.

Day slid into soft twilight, twilight into tender moonlight.

Lillian had been wooing the shadows with sweet strains from the piano, when moonlight touched the room and Wilfred called her into the magic circle.

"This is harmony enough," he said, his face luminous in the pale splendor. "Sit down where I can see you, and let's talk."

"In voices attuned to the lyre of the moon?" she responded laughingly, sinking into the embrasure of the window where the silvery fingers caught her slight figure and transformed it into a glimmering image. "Wilfred!"

The lad started at his name. He had not heard her words. "I thought I wanted to talk, but I don't. It's enough to be with you—that's what makes it so comfortable to have you. You respond so to one's thought."

"How do you know?"

"I feel it. I feel that now you know I am engulfed in the simple joy of spiritual being, that I should hate anything, *anything* that roused me from it; that

no dope fiend is more inert in his dream than I am in mine, and that this state is the best that life can offer. Don't wake me."

"Oh, then, I see Queen Mab has been with you."

"She's here. Don't frighten her away."

"What if she ride over me?"

"Let her. Hush!"

In the dim, entranced light they smiled, like the two young poets they were, into each other's eyes. Lillian sat in the window-seat, her head drooping to her hand, the lad in his deep chair facing her, a few feet away.

Yet, close as they were, friends though they were, Queen Mab, the conqueror, had wafted them wide apart. The budding poet, in the presence of her who long had symbolized to his sentimental youth pure Inspiration, had succumbed to the rhythmic beating of an ode which was slowly emerging into meaning in his brain. But had he fathomed the depths of his "Inspiration" now, he would have been disenchanted into rude prose.

For Lillian was no longer in the room, but out in the moonlight woods wandering with a shadowy figure beside her. And yet, was it she, or only the eternal Lancelot and Guinevere? Was it not de Maupassant who discovered that the moonlight was made for lovers? Well, whoever it was, he and she, dim figures, scarcely outlined in her fantasy, were out in the silvery sheen where spirit follows spirit undeterred, gliding through an infinity of immateriality, of awe-hushed loveliness.

A sudden sharp summons from the knocker brought them back.

"Oh, damn!" quoth the embryo poet, springing to his feet. Lillian, her heart knocking in echo, did not stir.

Tom, the butler, had promptly entered and opened the door.

"Is Mr. Wilfred Page here?" asked a full, peremptory voice.

Wilfred came forward, at once the courteous host. "I am Wilfred Page," he answered, while Tom held wide

the door. "Mr. Marchmont, I think. Come in, won't you? Tom, the lights."

"Oh, pray, no lights." He entered the shadowy room without further parley, tendering the book in explanation of his coming. "I am returning you your property," he said, with a certain attractive forthrightness, "and I hope you will pardon my arrogant usurpation of it; there are excuses."

"There are," laughed the boy, taking it from him. "That's why I'm glad to get it back. Will you stay a while? Or is it too much to ask you to shut yourself in on this perfect night? I am forbidden the night air, and Mrs. Wynne is suffering for it. I believe you have met?" He stepped aside, indicating the white figure in the window-seat which Marchmont had instantly descried.

He bowed, murmuring her name, but making no further advance.

"We have been poetizing in the moonlight," came the silvery voice. "If Mr. Marchmont cares to do anything so obsolete—" He strode forward, accepting the invitation before it was half uttered, and stood tentatively, a hand on the back of a chair. "We have turned our backs on the view; that is why it is possible."

"Do sit down," said Wilfred, resuming his seat, and Marchmont complied with elaborate carelessness.

"So you believe sight spoils inspiration," he responded, bending to Lillian with an interest dominantly perceptible in even the shadowy gloom.

"Always—for me."

"Then you must suffer many disappointments."

"N-no. Habit has given me the power of distinguishing my gods from mortals. I know when I have been in Arcadia."

"But the coming back?"

"Expected—and bracing."

"It's a queer sort of double consciousness, and it must be dangerous."

"What danger can it hold?"

"The danger of losing your grip. Pathologists will tell you why."

"What does pathology know of—?"

A sudden shyness fumbled with her thought.

"Soul?"

"We—some still call it that."

"The word is merely a summary. Everything is physical, you know. Ah, pardon!"

She felt the blood burning her face with his abruptly personal tone. "Why should you apologize?" she questioned musingly.

"Only to you."

"Me?"

"I am speaking to—you are still, I hope, Lillian Bonney."

"Well?"

"Of the poems."

Wilfred, content to listen to the soft current of interchanging, impersonal question and comment, felt a sudden gripping of his senses—as though he had seen Marchmont draw nearer to Lillian, and a flash of protesting anger held him breathless for a moment. If Lillian would only laugh—and so stifle that insufferable tone of—of understanding.

But Lillian was silent.

The man was speaking in low, musical gravity, bending a trifle nearer as if in excluding confidence. "I dare not approach the intangible spiritual—your very self, as I have interpreted it—unless you give me leave."

She felt herself gliding gently, without struggle from her moorings. "I don't think I quite understand," she uttered in a faint, far-away voice.

"I entered into—your holy of holies—in the reading. And it was a great, strange, rough surprise to me that I could see—beauty in apparent ugliness. I am Owen Marchmont, you know."

Her silence led him further.

"Sight has always spoiled the vision for me, too. But I never turned my back as you do. Instead, I looked—and laughed—crooked—out of one corner of my mouth. That's hideous, isn't it?"

"It is miserable," she murmured tremulously.

"No. There's a certain satisfaction—comfort, even—a sort of sense of

superiority in knowing one's power of insight. I have even gloated over it aloud for the edification of the smug blind. Forgive me again; it is a very strong instinct with me. But hereafter, when the light becomes too glaring and my eyes begin to ache, I shall close them, and perhaps I, too, shall be able to see 'the light that ne'er was seen'—through you."

He was personal. Wilfred sprang to his feet, his violence sending his chair careering down the polished floor. "We're getting moonstruck here," he laughed shortly, turning on the lights with nervous haste, and Marchmont arose to the emergency.

"I have intruded, I know," he said easily, taking his hat from the tabouret where he had thrown it, "and having expressed the—excuses for my unsolicited visit, I'll take myself off. Mr. Page, I'd like to show you a bed among my pines that would knock daylight into this indoor theory of your physician. Come and see it, and, if you like it, you might pitch your tent there."

It took Wilfred off his feet. "You—you're awfully good. But that, now *would* be an intrusion."

"Not on my habitat. You know I'm here today, gone tomorrow. I never allow anything or anybody to interfere with my inclinations—witness my being here at this moment. I'll be on the place all day tomorrow. Suppose you—and Mrs. Wynne come to see my wonderful pine grove." He turned partly toward her, but his eyes bore upon Wilfred with insistent kindness.

"Why," flushed the youth, appreciating the exceptional nature of the invitation from this eccentric, "I—I should think that would be jolly. There's only this: my people may come home at any hour tomorrow, and that might interfere. My mother and sister were called hurriedly to town owing to my father's sudden illness, and left Mrs. Wynne to shift for both of us. But they may be back tomorrow. If not, I'd like to go all right, if—it's up to you, Lillian."

"Why not?" she returned meaning-

lessly. She had risen, too, and stood in the background, a slight figure of pervasive moment. "I'm sure it would be charming."

"Thanks. Then tomorrow, about three, while the afternoon is still bright but 'growing pensive,' as you put it somewhere, I'll meet you. Good night."

Lillian, with housewifely care, was closing the piano when Wilfred turned from shutting out their visitor.

"Queer sort of chap," he remarked somewhat excitedly, smoothing his hair with his hand in meditative fashion. "One minute you feel like knocking him down, and the next you're covered with confusion as though someone of high degree were conferring an honor upon you by deigning to notice you. It's sort of disturbing, isn't it?"

"What?"

She was arranging the music, so intent upon her task she did not look around.

"Lillian!"

She veered about, surprised at his sudden blazing out upon her.

"I hate that fellow. I'm not going to his damned old pine grove."

"Why, Wilfred, dear boy, you look like a mad dog." She spoke in soft, open-eyed wonder. "All because I have lost my bet? I'll get the hickory staff for you tomorrow morning."

He leaned both hands upon the table, contemplating her insincerity, grievously pained. "You—you didn't resent his tone, his whole manner toward you. You *liked* it. You accepted it. Oh, Lillian!"

Under the rebuke of his scorching words and gaze Lillian's face flamed hotly. But she clung to her smiling surprise. "Well, Wilfred, I actually believe you are jealous because another dares to admire my poetry as much as you do. Egoist!"

"Your poetry! Hang poetry! At any rate, I'm not going to his old pinery. Good night." He flung out of the room and tramped in a passion up the stairs.

How uncomfortable Wilfred could be, she thought vaguely, standing mo-

tionless until the angry tramp of his feet had ceased. Her eyes were on the dull embers on the hearth, and, in subconscious concern, she moved to the fireplace and kneeling, began to cover the dying glow with ashes. But the grating of the shovel on the bricks rasped her nerves, and she put it by and sat on the rug, her hands clasped in her lap, gazing upon the cold, gray heap.

After all, it was no small accomplishment to have written those poems and evoked such praise from such a critic. She felt a tender, lingering pride in the erstwhile despised Lillian Bonney—Lillian Bonney whose name he had written “deserved to lie among the lavender-scented memories that bind us to our simpler selves.” Did he still think so? She smiled in swift denial, the tone, which Wilfred so resented, encompassing all her senses. And, suddenly, Elizabeth Bonney seemed garish, bizarre, *common*, beside this other beautiful self—something to be ashamed of since she had appealed only to Owen Marchmont’s lower faculties. For if Lillian Bonney’s clear trumpet notes could win him thus gladly to the heights, was that not a triumph more exquisite, more abiding? The next minute she had put the literary aspect of the experience aside. Owen Marchmont had met *her*, not alone her book, and the personal meeting had but intensified the psychic sympathy. She herself in the earthly garment with which nature had endowed her had proved the living epitome of what the book had been but a symbol. She loved her own loveliness because Owen Marchmont had found it lovely. She could afford to bury Elizabeth Bonney deep, and she did so with one stroke of eloquent, ecstatic thought. She looked to the chair where he had sat and lost herself in the effluence of his memory, composite of the man in person and the man as revealed in those dominating letters of a rougher virility.

When she finally turned off the lights and mounted the stairs to her room, she moved in a Narcissus-like joyous trance

which admitted of no disturbing, dream-destroying thought.

She awoke in the early dawn and sprang to the open window with a glad zest in life—an intoxication of spirit such as she had never before felt. Heavens! what a world of dewy beauty lay outspread before her—great trees dripping moisture from their bearded boughs, still, silvery waters reflecting trees, and cliffs, and dimpled meadows, as in a looking-glass. The rose-pearled hills, the dew-glistening grass, the sweet, honey-sucked breath of morning! She leaned a moment upon the sill, breathing in the glad wonder of it, and then, fleet as the thought, began making her toilet. She would get Wilfred his hickory staff! Maude Chamberlain had pointed the way to Vision Mountain, the name of which alone was alluring, and the stillness of the sweet morning called her irresistibly.

In high boots and short tramping skirt, trimly belted-in blouse, a wide, soft felt hat on the back of her head, she ran lightly downstairs and out of the quiet house into the open. She drew in deep, happy breaths of the sweet air, a laughing, nymph-like breeze seeming to run with her. She easily struck the trail.

She mounted through dappled glooms, shod as with unseen wings. The trees dripped mischievous drops of honeyed dew upon her lips, her hair, into her very eyes. She dashed them aside with a laugh, her bright gaze climbing the fern-hung heights up which she passed, which seemed, to her quickened imagination, to be the hanging-gardens of Pan. Her light, mounting footfall made no sound; she and the wooded-world were alone together. And presently—she had taken no heed of time and had no idea how long she had been climbing—she paused, breathless, realizing, by an added freshness in the air, that she was approaching the summit.

She stood tiptoe, peering through arresting boughs, and caught a glimpse of the ocean, a great, silvery band spanning the infinite unknown. The vision hushed the song in her blood.

Quietly, slowly she crushed her way through the snapping, barring branches and stood, a pigmy, agaze upon infinitude, until, saddened by its inscrutable grandeur, she turned her eyes away.

Two barren steeps, once one, which a rude force had cleft in twain, rose before her, framing the glorious vision, and as Lillian's eye traveled up the stark gray height, the blood ran curdling in her veins. For there, up the slope, grazing upon sterility, stood an awful horse, his long, starved neck outstretched, his skeleton ribs exposed—the very bone and mockery of life. Horrified, she stood, upgazing.

"Don't," said a man's quick voice beside her.

She turned her eyes, still wide with horror, upon him. "Oh, God," she murmured, barely conscious of his presence, "life is awful!"

"Come away—please," he entreated. "It's only a poor, straying devil of a horse."

"Why don't you—why doesn't somebody go lead him to pasture?" she cried passionately. "For heaven's sake, can't you get him down from that dreadful place?"

"He'll come down all right," he reassured her jocularly. "We can't be missionaries to all stray things. Besides, who knows that he doesn't *prefer* his occasional tuft and his thinness on the bare height to a fat, sleek gluttony on lower levels? You know there was once an ass who preferred his thistle to gold; so let's not presume. Just look at those birds!"

He had wiled her back into the forest, and, as he spoke, a flock of wild canaries, chirping, fluttering, trilling, flew in and about a giant fir about them. They paused, looking up.

"The happy things," he murmured, not looking at her. And presently she moved on, still silent, but the witchery of the glen soon asserted itself and, though a certain gravity still seemed to hold her aloof, she gradually met his eyes and his words with something like the responsiveness of the night before. And so they wandered together down the charmed heights into the lower,

lovely glades, not saying much, but each feeling the unaccustomed harmony of the other's presence. They stopped once beside a little brown, wrinkling brook and, loiteringly, threw stones, watching the water purl over them.

"Is it morning, or afternoon, or night, I wonder?" she said in a dreamy undertone, looking through the drooping boughs of a dusky madrone.

"It's nothing. It's no time," he answered, pitching his stone far and laughing a mellow, irresponsible laugh at the havoc it created in the timid, gurgling, woodland rill. "It's just once upon a time." He did not look at her, but he could feel the blood mantling in her sensitive face.

"Once upon a time," she echoed absently. "It sounds mythical and far away. Go on."

"There was a beautiful morning when all the world was young. And a beautiful princess wandered over the hills and far away and met a forlorn knight. It wasn't an appointment—it just happened."

He was smiling down at her and her eyes sought the lisping brook.

"As things will happen, given certain conditions," he continued with intrepid lightness. "He—the knight—wasn't all forlorn, however, because he had caught a glimpse of her the night before and he knew what things must be in this strange world, and hope had kindled a little, wistful flame in his darkened soul. Now, hope is only a beautiful thought, and a beautiful thought is a very precious thing unto him who hath it, and the knight cherished his radiant thought. So, when he came upon her that morning he knew——"

She had been moving slowly from him in unseeing, hypnotized stillness, but a tree-root tripped her foot. He caught her swiftly.

"Not hurt?" he questioned in low-voiced concern, his arm still about her.

For an imperceptible space she, he, the whole beautiful, hushed world, seemed standing breathless. Then,

"Of course not," she cried angrily,

wrenching herself from him, her eyes flashing into his. The next instant she had fled, fleet as a deer, down the trail.

Something in her commanding anger held Marchmont from following. He stood a-question, his eyes darkening queerly, his mouth smiling tenderly, gazing after her.

The sun lay warm on the grassy terrace when breathless, as if still fleeing, she came up the walk. A trilling bird seemed to greet her, but it was only Wilfred whistling, and catching sight of him upon the veranda, she sank with a long sigh to the step.

"Oh, where have you been, Billy boy?" he sang gaily, coming down to her.

She took off her hat and wiped her damp brow. "Why—I—I went to get you a hickory staff," she said draggingly, her handkerchief still busy about her temples.

"Where is it?"

"I couldn't find one I——"

"You look—and speak—as though you had been running."

"Maybe I have been." She looked wonderingly down at her feet and, turning about, drew them straight before her up to the step on which she sat.

"From what?" asked the boy, with evident curiosity.

"Oh—from myself, perhaps. There could be no other danger. Have you had breakfast?"

"You bet. Haven't you?"

"No. I'll go in in a minute."

"Stay where you are. I'll have it brought out to you right here."

She was back to earth again, and as the delicious aroma of the coffee stole into her senses she seemed to lose the excitement of the past few hours and gave herself up to a lethargy of spirit which, she told Wilfred, was fatigue.

An hour or two later, leaving him to his writing, she went upstairs to her room.

Even as she entered she felt an unseen presence, as if someone had preceded her and given to the very furniture an unfamiliar aspect. Yet everything was as usual and, as she closed the door, she realized that it was she

herself who was out of gear. She approached the dresser and—stopped short a foot away. A flood of angry, comprehending blood rushed to her visage and, for a moment, clouded sight.

The impudent, impudent fellow! What did he mean to insinuate? For it could have been none other than Wilfred who had found this large, speaking photograph of Adam and placed it under the mirror. It had not been there before, and he must have brought it to her room in her absence—to confound her, to accuse her silently of something which he had deprecated the night before. How dared he!

She turned furiously away, crossing, at a step, to the window. But the pictured face she had just seen obscured the view. It smiled genially out at her, as Edith's camera had flashed him in Summer attire last June, one hand daintily holding a half-smoked cigar, the other in his pocket, the broad shoulders just a bit stooped, the lips just forming for a joke.

"Where are you going to, my pretty maid?"

She stamped her foot as though the words had actually been spoken. Yet it was the recollection of this man that had made her run from Owen Marchmont! Why? Her hand folded and unfolded the edge of the muslin curtain to which she was clinging. Why couldn't people—and things—let her alone? Wilfred Page—that boy! She closed her eyes against his insight—his intrepid rebuke. She literally closed her eyes against the vision of that smiling, insistent, pictured face. But it persisted, found its way through the barring eyelids. And presently a sullen submission stole over her, as if those same stooping shoulders had gently fought their way through overpowering obstacles and quickly, but surely, taken possession of her. It was those shoulders, she was sure. Thought would go no higher—not to the face which recalled so much. She was tired of contention; let the possess-

ive shoulders take her. She sobbed for a moment, unconscious that tears were falling to her cheeks.

When she turned from the window it was as if she turned to greet her husband, very quiet, very gentle, very tired. The picture now meant little to her; the man, or rather, what he stood for, was more potently present.

She no longer felt any resentment toward Wilfred; and later when she joined him on the veranda, she had almost forgotten the rôle he had played in the silent scene; for a certain tonic, but, as yet, unformulated mental activity was taking shape within her which somehow gave her back a long-lost sense of strength and self-respect.

"I found that picture of old Adam in some rubbish this morning," the boy explained suddenly in a bright, offhand manner, but with a telltale cheek. "Did you see it? Your door was open and I put it on the dresser, thinking you might like to have it. It's so true a take-off."

Lillian smiled. "Yes, it is surprisingly good," she acquiesced lightly.

"Just like him. Sort of comfortable. I don't know another fellow more comfortable—I mean who makes you feel more comfortable—than Adam. He's so easy, don't you know. Fits in with any sort as though he knew something about everything and keeps it, through pure laziness, out of sight. I'll lay a wager he has read every book that is out—good, bad and indifferent."

Lillian laughed as if amused. "Yes, his taste is sort of eclectic. He is so easy, as you say. Who is coming?"

A horse's quick-beating hoofs struck sharply on the hard road, stopping at the gate. As they both went forward a small boy slid from the horse's bare back and came up the terrace steps toward them.

"A telegram," he announced, handing it to Wilfred, and the next instant he was gone, the horse's retreating hoofs again sounding sharply in the still air.

"Father, mother and myself will be home on the 1.20 train."

"EDITH."

Wilfred read the message aloud,

and Lillian went in to tell the servants they would wait luncheon until their arrival.

She came out a few minutes later and stood, an alert figure, before him. "What time does the down-train leave this afternoon?" she asked.

"Three-thirty. Why?"

"I'm going home. You won't need me and I've played truant long enough."

"Oh, stay, and have a good time with Edith. Adam will come up in a few days, won't he?"

"Can't tell," she responded firmly, "so I'm going, and if——"

"But, Lillian, that Marchmont man!"

"Well, you said you had no intention of going, so send a message explaining we can't come. I think, while we are waiting, I'll go up and pack."

No entreaty of the Pages, upon their return, could move her from her smiling resolution, and at the scheduled time she left them, with pleasant and regretful farewells.

V

THE journey home was long, hot and tiresome. Yet when she reached town in the calm of evening and stood waiting for her car among the many railroad tracks which all seemed running to her and away in bewildering, yet orderly, trafficking dominance, with thousands of electric lights streaming on buildings and asphalt in sharp reminder of the day's work, amid the incessant, insistent ringing of bells, the whirr of trolley, the tooting and whizz of automobiles, the swift roll of wheels, the hurrying crowd, all moving toward that distant, indistinct hum of life beyond, she seemed to rise from an inert dream, suddenly to brace herself for the quick, relentless demands of self-protection, self-care; for the niche where she belonged, which inscrutable circumstance had made for her out of the hurly-burly, for the little work she had to do, for the life she had to live; life material, a doing, not a dreaming. And even while she rode on the speeding car she

seemed to be hurrying, as though life were all too short for the thousand and one duties she had to perform. The reaction of feeling was almost vindictive in its severity. It was the old Puritan habit of mind reclaiming her.

The little house seemed strangely quiet and deserted as she approached it, yet Adam, she thought, must still be dining and the dining-room should show a light. She drew out her key, deciding to surprise him by appearing suddenly before him.

She softly unlocked the door, then stood for a moment, hesitant, dismayed, upon the threshold. The house was absolutely dark and quiet. She closed the front door and turned on the light.

"Nora!" she called loudly. But no one answered.

"No one at home," she decided, still calling as she moved hurriedly from room to room, and her call echoed eerily through empty walls.

"The unexpected guest," she mused, raising her pretty eyebrows, as she descended again to the dining-room, with its orderliness and unset table.

"It must be one of Adam's working nights and he has dined downtown, and Nora has taken the night off. I'll find something to eat and ring him up later at the office."

"At any rate," she soliloquized, preparing a light repast, "I'm glad he dined at home last night. Here are enough remnants for a regiment. Such extravagance!" And in her mind's eye, as she leisurely drank her tea, she added up columns of figures on domestic purposes.

It was about nine o'clock when, refreshed and rested, she telephoned to her husband at the railroad office. But she could get no answer and, after repeated efforts, she finally gave it up.

"He has either left or gone to the theatre, or somewhere," she assured herself. "I'll sit up till he comes—it won't be long now."

She settled herself to read in the living-room, fell asleep, waked; but there was still no sign of Adam. She looked at the clock and saw with sur-

prise that it was midnight. Nora was late—but Adam! "Playing truant," she thought sleepily, but started with self-consciousness at the thought. Adam play truant! A sad smile of indulgence curved her lips. Adam—and she!

She was still contemplating the difference which seemed to remove them miles apart, when she heard a key in the latch and, the next instant, his sprightly step in the hall. The light in the living-room attracted him and he came straight toward it.

She sat in the low easy-chair, smiling serenely up at his astounded face.

"You!" he exclaimed, standing still upon the threshold.

The exclamation, so different in its blankness from what she had expected, repulsed her as effectively as might a door slammed sharply in her face. She mentally twisted herself about. "Me," she returned, waiting.

He strode nervously toward her and, with a laugh mixed of confusion and apology, put an arm about her and hastily kissed her. "What brought you home so suddenly?" he asked, slipping out of his overcoat and throwing it over a chair. To Lillian's aroused curiosity, he seemed awkward, uncertain, as though not quite at home with her.

"The train, dear," she answered in exaggerated simplicity. "What did you suppose?"

"I expected a telegram, a message of some sort. I—I might have prepared 'a loaf of bread, a jug of wine,' for thee." He laughed more easily, as if propped by the quotation, and drew up a chair beside her. "I gave Nora a day off, too; she won't be home till morning. Have you had anything to eat?"

"Plenty. Been working hard, Adam? Were you working tonight?" She smoothed his hair from his brow as he took her other hand.

"You bet I have been. Without a break till I left the office a half-hour ago."

"Suppose I had telephoned you that I was home?"

"Why didn't you? I'd have flown to you on the wings of the morning."

"You might not have heard."

"Not have heard! The telephone's right at my elbow on the desk. It would have seemed spooky enough down there. As you can imagine, it doesn't often ring at night. But tell me something about the Pages. Did they reach home all right?"

Why had the unexpected expression of his greeting robbed her of her usual frankness? What could she suspect? Why could she not tell him outright that she had telephoned him? Why had not the summons been answered? Had he, perhaps, fallen asleep? Possibly. And yet the Adam Wynne who had greeted her was not the Adam Wynne she was familiar with—not the simple figure of love and protection to which she had flown in her hour of self-distrust.

"He is hiding something from me," she decided, relying, without the shadow of a doubt, upon the intuition which had always proved clairvoyant to her. The thought irritated. What could he possibly be about for which he could not give some sort of credible explanation? A mere matter of business could not have robbed him of his joy in his wife's return. "And there could be nothing else," she concluded summarily, as if solving a problem in simple equation.

Yet, the seed of distrust once sown, she began to note certain changes. Or were they changes? Had his gay geniality always held this forced note, or had she been only non-observant, taking everything, once so conceived, for proved? But the peculiar effect of her suspicion was not to whet her curiosity—she could wait for the divulging of such secrets as Adam could have—it only roused a sense of dull anger that he could possess an interest apart from her; a pettish, spoilt feeling, which grew in ugliness.

"Well." So she at last dismissed him and his mystery in inaudible contempt. And Adam, in this aspect, seemed to demand less of her, to recede

more and more from her intimacy and attentions.

And, thrown back upon herself, her vagabond thoughts wandered anew into wilds she thought forever forsaken.

It was only two days after her return that, with a species of idle, but impish bravado, she sat re-reading the slight handful of letters she had received from Owen Marchmont. They roused her intensely. "I should have destroyed them," she recognized with severity while hiding them carefully away in the secret compartment of her desk. But her hands lingered. A moment later she had drawn them out again and turned over the last—the one she had never answered, the one from which she had run.

The passionate force of the sentences smote into her brain with feverish insistence.

"Motive alone sins or saints the act," he had quoted from her lawless book. What would her motive be now, if——?

Yet why not? Why, then, had she not revealed herself in those enchanted, silence-haunted woods? Coward? No doubt. But there had been little time. Looked at in calmness, what was there to fear? A man and woman who understand and wish to speak face to face throw off the veil. Not in trepidity; merely the equilibrium born of knowledge. Motive?—to know one another, not only in the spirit, but in the light of the senses. A lower concept, perhaps, than the former, but human, natural—call it the recreation, the entertainment, the passing show of the ideal. *She* had had that sort of entertainment, having full knowledge. Not he. Was it fair?

You know you have stirred *me*. I am not speaking of my mental interest in you, nor of my critical passion in your work—not speaking of Owen Marchmont in his literary capacity. I am speaking of the man whose imagination you have raised to the fever point of action. . . . It is you I want to know now—you, Elizabeth Bonney, the woman!

And he had met her and had not known. Was it fair? Why not stand revealed now? In his eyes there was nothing to be ashamed of. It would be

—interesting. And what a sensation—*dénouement*, for him—this unifying of a dual personality! Her face flushed with inconsistent gladness over the fleeting consideration that in both rôles she had found favor in his eyes.

And yet—men abhorred sensationalism—that is, men of his artistic stamp. They preferred their “sustained interest” to be independent of the vulgar claptrap of “the last page,” “the curtain,” the opening of the Bluebeard door. But if the means compensated, overtopped, made *nil* the end? If the end were, in reality, the means, in the sense of cause, would not that excuse it? She thought it would, smiling musingly. And still she did not move.

It had all happened so long ago—the book, and the letters—this letter. What if he had forgotten, had let it go as a fruitless incident? At the suggestion a terrible silence seemed to assail her. She had let the only thing in her colorless life worth having go from her without a word, without lifting a finger to stay it, to make it tangible, real. For Adam’s sake! Adam! A cold superciliousness stirred the sullenness of her tragedy. Adam had other private interests. Why could not she?

She deliberately turned over the letter to the dating. It had been written only six days before. Six days—and two of them they had passed together at Edgeclyffe! She laughed excitedly over the piquancy of the situation. He had been flirting with Lillian Bonney while, surreptitiously, Elizabeth Bonney had been meeting and learning to know Owen Marchmont himself!

“Why, it’s ridiculous, this Hamletian soliloquizing over an innocent little affair like this. Let’s do, and be done with it, then it will be out of my mind. I wonder if he is in town. At any rate, it will be fun.” Yet she knew in her heart she was playing with fire.

With the gay assurance and scoffing attitude of Elizabeth Bonney in the ascendant, she picked up her pen. “It smacks of a schoolgirl bent upon her first mischief,” thought Lillian—Elizabeth—Bonney-Wynne. The next mo-

ment, however, choosing a place of meeting out of the many crowding in upon her defiant imagination, she wrote, in the bold handwriting which had in so occult a manner become her faithful accomplice:

O. M.:

If you have not forgotten, you will meet me Thursday afternoon at four at Vaughan’s Art Gallery. “I shall wear black and carry a bunch of violets.”

E. R. B.

She added the quotation marks as an afterthought, the saving loophole of a gleam of humor. Better keep that little smile ready, tucked away in a convenient corner of one’s most serious consciousness, in case things turned out a farce. And again Lillian doped her fear of consequences by humming a popular air, all the way to and from the post-office, and she clung to this musical method of anesthesia up to the moment of receiving the reply.

E. R. B.:

I shall be at Vaughan’s Art Gallery Thursday afternoon at four. “I shall wear dark gray and have a white carnation in my buttonhole.”

O. M.

She smiled over his merry responsiveness in the matter of the quotation marks, but at the same time she realized that the song in her brain had suddenly stopped. It seemed to her that she had, in the reading of his answer, grown up; that a hardening of conscience, like that which age brings to the muscles, had settled upon her. And by the natural bent of a mind which always deduces its corollary she decided that duplicity was the only possible procedure in this complexity called life, in the light of which summary she ceased to regard Adam and his untold chapter with hurt superiority. Was not each individual a separate, nautilus-like entity? A certain gay urbanity took her—that august height of experienced knowledge which demands little of another.

When Thursday arrived she went to her appointment with steadily beating pulses. She seemed to be keeping step to a compelling military march which admitted of no side-stepping.

She made a careful, almost severe toilet. The mass of golden hair which she usually wore low, twisted in graceful, girlish fashion at the nape of her neck, she now drew up in dignified order to the crown of her head. Her gown was black, and she tucked a bunch of fragrant Parma violets into her jacket, in accordance with the arrangements of the rendezvous.

"Not very distinctive," she thought—was it with a subconscious sense of safety?—as she proceeded on her way.

It was fully a half-hour before the appointed time when she reached the art gallery. A water-color exhibition was on, and, in the rich, tempered light, a few women and one or two men were moving quietly from picture to picture. With quick eye Lillian saw that Owen Marchmont was not present.

She secured a catalogue and began an unseeing pilgrimage of the room. She seemed to feel the seconds slipping from under the hands of the tiny watch hidden in her bosom. Several laughing young girls with a youth in tow came in and filled the air with electric joyousness.

Lillian, recognizing one of the little group, stepped instinctively into a small adjoining room reserved as a resting-place for ladies. She thought her veil needed adjusting, and advanced to the mirror over the couch at the opposite end. On the way she consulted her watch. It lacked five minutes of four.

She saw her face as through a haze as she stood retwisting the ends of her veil into security within the rim at the back of her hat. But she presently became conscious that the mirror reflected the red baize swing-door which admitted visitors to the gallery, and even as she noticed, it was pushed sharply open and a man entered.

Her first perturbed recognition was, curiously enough, of the white carnation in his buttonhole. But the next instant, to her consternation and momentary relief, she perceived that it was not Owen Marchmont who wore it, but—Adam!

A sort of silent, hysteric laughter seized her, and she fled farther to an inner room securely cut off from intrusion. As she shot the bolt to she realized that she was trembling, breathing shortly, her cheeks and lips scorching hot.

Of all strange coincidences—Adam! What was he doing here at this time of the day? True, the exhibit. But it was not of enough importance to explain his taking a recess from his night-intruding work. And with a white carnation in his buttonhole! Truly the gods play the farce with cunning. But a cold, white fear fell softly, like a pall, over her baffling confusion. He had walked in *differently* somehow—not with Adam's usual leisurely assurance, his easy survey. It had been done quickly, sharply, as if on time.

Could he—by some fatality—have found out? Could Owen Marchmont—? Nonsense! Owen Marchmont did not know who Elizabeth Bonney was. She stood stonily still in her corner—Lillian Bonney again supreme—wildly picturing the two men out there, each with his white carnation, and again only Adam, the avenger. But *was it Adam?* Perhaps it was only the abnormal activity of her nerves which had produced the hallucination; perhaps it had been only a pathological Adam, after all!

The reasonableness of this suggestion being borne in upon her, she finally opened the door and sallied forth.

To Lillian's surprise, the gallery was deserted save for the presence of a single schoolgirl who was passing hurriedly from picture to picture. At Lillian's entrance she turned eagerly toward her, a light of recognition breaking over her round, young face.

"Oh, Mrs. Wynne, I'm so glad it's you. I was beginning to get frightened here, alone. Mother said I *must* see the pictures—I don't think much of them, do you?—they all look so painted. So I came in, late, from the dentist's, and now everybody has gone and—But have you seen the 'pictures?'"

"Yes. But have you been here long alone?"

"Oh, about ten minutes, I suppose, but it seemed ages to me—it was spooky with just pictures for company. There were a lot of people when I came, but they all dropped off. Are you going now?"

Lillian had drawn out her watch. "Was there anyone you knew? Did you see Mr. Wynne?" She was scrutinizing her watch closely, and finally held it to her ear.

"No, was he here? I didn't see him; if I had I'd have spoken to him; he's so jolly, isn't he? Has your watch stopped?"

"No, I thought something was wrong with it. It's really twenty minutes to five," she announced, with a dazed smile. "How could time have sped so quickly? Yes, I'll have to be going, too. Coming with me? That's good."

They went out together, the girl chatting incessantly. But the only thought Lillian was conscious of was that Owen Marchmont was probably possessed of a proud, fierce temper, and that by her act she had set it ablaze. Yet how could she have acted differently—with Adam Wynne there? But had she not decided that Adam had *not* been there? In truth, Marchmont's figure dimmed that of the other; she had room in her tortured imagination only for him, his teeth set, striding angrily from the place to which she had apparently befooled him. A smothered hatred for Adam and his ubiquity seized her while she gave vague ear and absent response to the girl's rippling talk as they rode home side by side.

If Owen Marchmont had left the art gallery in a fit of choler, it was in something of a like spirit that Lillian answered the telephone at about six o'clock that evening.

"That you, Lillian?"

"Yes, Adam."

"Yes. I called you up to say I can't be home to dinner. Awfully sorry."

"Busy?"

November, 1906—3

"Head over heels."

"At the office?"

"Where else? So I won't take the time to ride home and back."

"A new branch of economy, isn't it? Making up for time wasted?"

"What?"

"Oh, nothing. I just thought——"

"What do you mean?"

"Nothing at all."

"Oh, yes, you did. Your tone was most insinuating."

"Don't you think that's absurd?"

"Not at all. You certainly seem very much out of temper."

"So do you."

"Perhaps. But, as I told you, I'm very busy."

"Well, then, I won't keep you. Good-bye."

"Good-bye."

It was their nearest approach to an open quarrel, but it only seemed to chime in with the general discomfort of things.

"I simply don't believe him," said Lillian to herself almost with aplomb. "There isn't a doubt in my mind now that it *was* Adam I saw, white carnation and all. And if he has time to haunt picture galleries in the daytime—in secrecy—I suppose he can find time for other things at night—in secrecy. It's sickening, that's all."

From disdainful acceptance she had worked herself into a state of resentful disgust. The step thence to angry action was easy. A plan was forming itself dimly, confusedly through her excitement.

"I'll try telephoning again before I do anything precipitate," she granted, as night closed about her.

But all her patient, persistent ringing, at intervals consuming an hour, evoked no answer.

Then, deliberately, she rang for a cab. It was only nine o'clock, and, if he was due at the office, his work would be in full swing at that hour, and the windows of his office, which, as she well knew, gave on the street, would show a line of light through their blinds.

The carriage arrived shortly after,

and, with intrepid footstep, she ran lightly out into the night.

"Drive down to the offices of the Great Western Railway. You know it? No, don't stop; drive very slowly past; then I will give you further directions."

She snapped the door to and drew well back into the corner as she was whirled away. Then only did the nature of the thing she was doing blaze clear in the refinement of her normal mind's eye. "I am doing something bizarre, something melodramatic, something common!" And her fair, fine face sank lower, her gaze fastening imploringly upon her slender, gloved hands, clasped tightly together.

"Something inexcusable—to him. He—I suppose he has a right to his silence. Perhaps it is something I shouldn't know. Perhaps it is something for me! But why pretend he is busy at the office if he isn't there? Why the picture gallery in the middle of the afternoon, if he is so busy? Surely—surely it must have been an appointment. Of course, with a man. I know any other suspicion is incongruous in connection with Adam. It—it's just of a piece with—myself and—these last few weeks. I'm coloring my whole world with my own off-color madness."

A sharp sense of loneliness took her, a sense of being adrift, cut off from all human ties, and she heaved a great sigh of bitterness, pressing her trembling lips close, sturdily keeping her tears from falling. But presently this weakness was succeeded by a throb of excitement as they turned into the broad thoroughfare, and the lively trot of the horses changed to a slow, steady pace, and she knew they were nearing the offices of the Great Western.

The grim, gray stone edifices looked down now upon the wide, gray stoniness of the silent pavements like so many eyeless sphinxes, pitiless in their stony stare. And as the horses came to a snail-like walk, a slow iciness mounted from her limbs to her very heart.

She gazed steadily out, the carriage almost stopping as they passed the broad line of many windows—all quiet in their shroud of absolute darkness.

"I knew it!" she summed up to herself in cynical triumph. But the driver was saying something.

"No—that's all," she replied. "You may drive home now."

She leaned back again in her corner. What had she proved? Merely that her husband was lying to her—had, no doubt, been systematically lying to her for many weeks. In all the wide world now there was no one upon whom she could rely—not even upon herself. A long, sobbing shudder of wretchedness convulsed her, but, in its passing, she laughed strangely.

"Silly, silly thing!" she apostrophized, with laggard justice. "Are you so deep in subterfuge that you can't think of the one natural straightforward thing to do? Where's Mr. Dick? Of course the only thing to do was to ask him outright. And so I will as soon——"

Her uplifted gaze was suddenly shocked as by a flashlight. And in the flash she had seen her husband's laughing face turned up as if to another as he tilted back in a chair in an upper room ablaze with light.

She leaned out into the night.

"Driver," she questioned gently, "what is that tall, narrow building we have just passed—there, with the lights on the third floor?"

"That? Oh, that's the offices of a paper, m'm. I think it's called *The Lantern*."

VI

ADAM was laughing up into the face of Gleason, the senior editor.

"So Elijah's ready to take his mantle out of soak, is he?" he commented.

"Yes, he's had enough of the wilderness, and is prepared to come back to the sanctuary or betake himself Europeward, I believe, according as to whether we insist or not."

"And do you insist?"

"That depends on your attitude. You know Marchmont doffed the mantle in question most astoundingly abruptly, and left it where it fell, leaving us to pick it up after him or let it lie as we would. It was a high-handed prophet-like act enough, and if I hadn't run up against you that very day I'd have held him to his contract by main force or—by the mantle of the law, by George! The name of Owen Marchmont was too valuable an asset to our paper to let it go for a balky mood."

"But I thought the man had suffered a nervous breakdown—was ill."

"Ill—your grandmother! He simply felt like chucking the job, and he chucked it. It was my good luck to meet you that day and an inspiration, after you consented, to force the man to fork over his name in lieu of his work till the contract expires. That's still two months off, Wynne."

"Yes, I know."

"Are you going to stick to us?"

"My name isn't Owen Marchmont."

"You mean from the viewpoint of honor!"

"Lord, no! From much lower considerations. As a writer or—an asset."

"It's good enough for us. The question is, can you stand the strain?"

"The work? Oh, the railroad work is a cinch, you know, else I wouldn't have thought of undertaking this. No, that isn't the trouble."

"Well, what is?"

The easy unconcern had fled from Adam's clear-cut, thin face. A sheet of flame suffused it and left it frowning. But the candid eyes looked hardily at his interlocutor.

"Call it the publicity," he said shortly.

"What! Too modest to bear the literary honor?"

"Oh, shucks, no. Only less free to think as I damn please."

"A false prophet, then, old man. Well, adopt another pseudonym and the public won't be any the wiser."

"The public be hanged!"

"Then what——?"

He paused curiously to watch the young man as he sprang from his chair

and, striding over to the windows, began to pull down the shades with vicious vim.

When he turned about and came back to his chair he met Gleason's chuckle with an appreciative laugh. "Looks like it, doesn't it?" he admitted, resting his elbow on the desk, his head in his hand, the other hand scratching at the ink stains with a paper-knife. "Well, the truth is, my wife doesn't know anything about it."

"What! Why don't you tell her?"

"I'm afraid the shock might hurt. It is rather shocking, you know."

"What? Your being able to write a good critique?"

"On what—to her—is a bad book. I wouldn't be proud of it before her."

"Ah!"

"You see, her inspiration—and mine—are as wide apart as heaven and hell. It would be rather confounding to her to know that I admire, or am deeply interested in phases of life that are abhorrent to her."

"But, surely, she knows—you've discussed these questions?"

The man blushed, and it was a nice thing to see, thought Gleason.

"Oh, no," Adam said very simply.

"You know she's just a bit—better, than the rest of the world."

Gleason forebore to smile—he thought this even nicer. "Of course I know Lillian Bonney's poems," he said seriously, "and if she resembles them at all, I can understand your diffidence. But, as Shaw says, 'You never can tell,' Wynne." He spoke the last words with a teasing shake of the head.

"I think I can," returned Wynne, and his tone closed that side of the question. "Besides, the mere fact that I have presumed to hold a critical pen in my hand would, I verily believe, make her die with laughter."

"But she knows you have the gift."

"She knows I read everything that's going. As I've told you, I never discuss iconoclasticisms with her, so she doesn't know of the passion which made it possible for me to make a try

at your offer. The thing is, how did you know?"

"Why, man alive, I told you when I made you the offer that you've been as eloquent as a hot-box to me on certain writers and their work; so eloquent in fact, you've left scars on my memory."

"Have I?"

"Fact. I remember walking up the street one day after luncheon with you, and you were about as scintillant as you were in that article of yours on 'Mere Woman.' By the way, did she peter out with that explosion? Aren't we going to have another from her soon?"

"I really don't know."

"But you've asked her for more, of course?"

"Well—no."

"Oh, that's the caper, man, that's the formal thing for you to do. Better do it, too, before the sensation of the first has clean worn off. By the way, I never asked you—the name is the same—is she any connection of your wife's?"

"Not that I know of."

"Apparently not. Well, you worry her into writing another for us, at her own price, and we'll announce it; it will be a big ad. And we'll consider you've accepted the position as a permanency, eh?" Gleason had risen and was moving toward the door.

"I'll decide in a day or two. Will that do?"

"Good. And don't forget to write, tonight if possible, to that 'Mere Woman' woman. At her own price, mind you."

The door closed behind him, and Adam turned to his work. A copy of that week's *L'Illustration*, presenting a pregnant play by Paul Hervieu, lay at his hand and he picked it up. He read French easily, but tonight the words stared up at him like hieroglyphics.

He was still smarting over the blow of Elizabeth Bonney's impish caprice, for so her failure to keep the appointment appeared to him. In fact, he was so wrought upon by the occur-

rence that he could not keep his seat. He began a nervous, distracting striding of the apartment.

It had been a fortuitous, piquant event in his hitherto simple, well-ordered life, this secret appointment with Elizabeth Bonney, outcome as it was of his clandestine occupation. That he had had to meet her the nature of their correspondence had made manifest—he questioned the psychic necessity no more than he would have questioned a law of nature. That it was a thing in which Lillian could hold no part he accepted intuitively, without conscious thought; and that, too, was of the nature of the affair. As to what the meeting might mean to him, he did not weigh. The one paramount necessity was that the consuming desire of his curiosity should be satisfied. After that? That idea did not trouble him. And she had been indulgent finally and had apparently met his demand with gay graciousness, even to the very details of the appointment. But in the end she had met him with what was tantamount to a burst of fiendish laughter.

Well, no doubt, he had played the fool to the indolent amusement of a sophisticated coquette. The ludicrous figure of Malvolio presented itself to his heated fancy and he came to an abrupt halt in his caged walk, gritting his teeth hard.

Then with a sudden, furious gesture, as if throwing off a weight, he strode over to his typewriter and slipped paper in place, sharply mastering his thoughts.

Gleason had said, "Write to her." So he would, as amanuensis for *The Lantern*, cutting himself free of her with the first click of the keys. He began his missive, his face set as indifferently as seemed the noncommittal words he was imprinting.

MISS ELIZABETH BONNEY.

DEAR MADAM: I have been requested by the editors of *The Lantern* to ask you to consider the writing of another story for that publication. After "Mere Woman," anything from your pen would be read with keen interest, and with no doubt as to its availability. The management further cour-

teously begs to say that they would accede to any fair price you might set upon such a work.

Trusting that you will consider this request with favor, and awaiting a reply at your earliest convenience, I am, dear madam,

Yours truly,
OWEN MARCHMONT.

"A Roland for her Oliver," he thought with grim satisfaction, sealing and addressing the note. He felt assured that he had made it indubitably clear that, for him, the incident was closed.

He picked up the French play again, but the glamour had been rubbed off the surface of things for him for that night and, feeling that he was reading in a spirit of dogged unresponsiveness, he flung the thing down and prepared to go home.

It was only when he was approaching the house that remembrance of Lillian came to him in a vague, disjointed way. "Seems as though we'd had a sort of misunderstanding. At any rate, something disagreeable. I suppose I was rather nasty—beastly mood that I was in! Took her innocent words for insinuations—the guilty conscience, of course. Guilty—rubbish! But in her eyes—no quarter. Well, that's over. Life's at the ordinary level. I suppose if I'm to keep up the scribbling I might as well break it to her gently—tonight as well as any other time. There are no other considerations, now, to prevent. If she's asleep, it can wait, of course, for any other old time."

He fitted the key in the latch with an odd sense of great lassitude. The house seemed small, dull, colorless. As he went upstairs, the thought of the monotony of sane lives assailed him wearily. "The reward of virtue," he thought impersonally, and wondered whether he had read that in Hervieu's play. He came leisurely toward their bedroom, and even as he entered the knowledge of its emptiness rushed strong upon him.

"Lillian," he said softly, but he knew he would receive no answer.

He turned on the light, disclosing the desertion of the quiet room. He

stood moveless, his hand still on the electric button. He was not alarmed, but a tide of consciousness swept in a dark flood over his face. "It was only my beastly humor," he decided, and, feeling that she had made the punishment fit the misdemeanor, he went straight, with no exaggeration of values, to the little guest chamber at the end of the corridor.

As he had expected, the usually open door was closed. He knocked gently, but received no answer. He tried the door, but found it locked.

"Lillian," he called in a low voice, his mouth close to the panel.

The answer came as from a great distance, but clear and quite without expression. "Yes?"

"What is the matter?"

"Oh—nothing."

"Why are you in here?"

"I wanted to be alone."

"You're not ill, are you?"

"Oh, no."

"Lillian, you're hurt, angry with me. I know. I spoke in an unpardonable way to you over the telephone, but I—I was dead tired and busy. Won't you forget it?"

"I have forgotten it."

"Then—won't you kiss and be friends?"

"Please, Adam, go away. I told you I was out of sorts and wanted to be alone."

"But won't you open the door just for a minute?"

"What for?"

"Oh, for—ducks."

Silence followed the silly plea.

Then the answer came, apparently more distant than in the beginning. "Really—I can't understand your insistence. I told you I wished to be undisturbed."

"Forgive me. I'll see you in the morning. Good night, darling."

"Good night."

An absurd rhyme jingled in Adam's disturbed senses as he turned, frustrated, away, and he found himself marching disconsolately to its rhythm as he went down the corridor:

"He to get the warm side inside
Put the wrong side inside outside."

"Put the wrong side inside outside," he repeated again and again as he began to undress.

Breakfast passed very much as usual, Lillian ignoring his attempt at reconciliation, seemingly ignoring, in an airy, peremptory way, the whole disagreement, and he decided to take his cue from her, waiving all explanation until the evening when, as he mentally phrased it, they would have "a grand clearance tale."

But Lillian did not achieve serenity so easily. If on his return the night before he had given any evidence of desiring to explain his duplicity, she would have been ready, eager, to meet him half-way; to open the door, as it were, to him. But his contrition had been only for his manner at the telephone—it was evident he had no intention of making a confidante of her. And the knowledge rankled, more in her vanity—so delicately, though unconsciously, fostered throughout her life, first by her mother, then by Adam himself—than in her heart. The impulse she had experienced in the carriage to "ask him outright" had died a quick death after that one glimpse of him in the lighted office of *The Lantern*.

It was not her place to bridge the estrangement, she argued excitedly, wondering all the while what he had been doing in that upper chamber. She blindly reviewed his appearance in the art gallery, the coincidence of the white carnation, and finally, his presence in a place connected, in her mind, only with Owen Marchmont—a place far removed in interest from Adam's own restricted walk in life—and it all formed a distracting chain of mystery to which she held no key. The first flashing suspicion that Adam knew, that Owen Marchmont had, inadvertently, or intentionally, discovered her to him, had robbed her all that night of any clear-thinking, but his whole tone and attitude, both that night and morning, dispelled all fear

of this, unless knowing, he had decided to pass it over, understanding that he was not the man to stand between her and her artistic opportunities. If so, it was very generous, very broad-minded, very— She drew a deep breath of incomprehension. For a moment his face, lined with weariness, yet tender and gay in its supplicating expression, together with his bright voice, passed like a ghost through her memory. After all, she must wait, she thought, vacillating strangely, at last. And so the morning fled.

It was late afternoon when she bethought herself that there might be something explanatory or denunciatory awaiting her at the post-office, and she went in search of Elizabeth Bonney's mail.

"The last letter," she told herself, thrusting it carefully into her handbag, reserving, as usual, the reading of this class of mail until safe at home. "I shall write, telling him I no longer hold the post-box."

In the solitude of her own room she read the cold, businesslike communication. It stilled her oddly, this formal expression of anger at white heat. As she finished, a peculiar, sardonic knowledge smote her—the surprising knowledge that she did not care! It gave her a sudden, complete command of her faculties.

She smiled deeply, wisely.

"*Allons!*" she soliloquized summarily. "You shall have your answer, and then we shall see what we shall see."

She seated herself at her desk. She knew that whatever she wrote must be, not only frankly explanatory of her dereliction of the day before, but veiledly interpretive of his masked missive. She dipped her pen.

At the first word she stopped, looking down in shocked denial at it. She had used Lillian Bonney's fine, small pen-stroke. She put it hastily aside and took up another sheet, deliberately posing her mind to the rôle of Elizabeth Bonney, and leaving the rest to the miracle her fingers had so

often before achieved for her. But it was useless—Elizabeth Bonney's shadowy hand had forgotten its cunning.

She sat gazing curiously down at this impish manifestation. "So Lillian Bonney has the whip-hand, has she, and Elizabeth is cowering impotently out of sight. Queer! Nonsense. Lillian, sweet saint, just step aside for a moment." But all her painstaking suasion could not conjure back the lost power. "I've been too violently disturbed," she gave in finally, "and all that nice distinction between identities has been disturbed, too. No doubt everything will readjust itself when my nerves quiet down."

Meanwhile, she decided, her answer must be written, and at once. The clock in her brain, ticking at a furious rate, told her that the strain could not endure much longer. She promptly arose and turned to her old, disused typewriter in the corner.

Then, only for a moment did she pause, and the machine was soon clicking under her nervous finger:

O. M.:

I have received your letter with its generous offer concerning further work. I can answer the question more fully in person, I think, than in writing. There are many explanations—apologies, perhaps, of a positively acquitting nature—to be offered on many points. If you will meet me at the same time and place, with the same marks of distinction, tomorrow (Saturday) afternoon, I shall be there, as *I was yesterday*, and no possible intervention can prevent our meeting. You will receive this by the first delivery tomorrow morning. Your answer will reach me by two of the afternoon, so there will be ample time to keep the appointment.

E. R. B.

Adam's "grand clearance tale" did not come off that evening as he had planned. He came home dumb with the pain of a wretched headache which spoke miserably out to her through his eyes.

An accusing spirit leaped in Lillian's conscience as she looked at him. "You had better go to bed," she suggested in low-voiced solicitude, her cool palm on his aching brow, and Adam willingly went.

Only when his head touched the

pillow did he speak, with closed eyes and tense jaws. "There's something I—wanted—to say to you—tonight—but it will have to wait—till tomorrow."

"Don't think of it, dear," she murmured, trembling inexplicably, her lips lingering on his brow.

The next morning, a trifle wan, but alert as usual, he repeated his promise before leaving.

"We'll have a heart-to-heart talk tonight over the teacups," he said, "quotationally," at the door in the soft gold of the morning sunlight. "The pain that made the music mute last night has fled, and Richard is himself again. Seems as though all's right with the world, doesn't it, love?" And, raising his hat, he was gone.

Yes, thought Lillian, with a renunciatory smile, Richard certainly was himself again. But the clock in her brain kept vigilant time with the merciless little clock on the mantel.

"He has received it by this time," she counted, and through the intervening hours wondered *how* he had received it.

She was at the post-office in good time, received the anticipated reply and, contrary to precedent, she opened it, walking home.

E. R. B.:

I shall be there as agreed.

M.

And there was no retreat.

She did not know why she felt such a sense of finality as she prepared for the meeting—as though she were winding up her affairs before some great departure. Even Nora felt her exceeding gravity as she gave her parting instructions, and she sagely told herself that Mrs. Wynne "looked like there was a death in the family."

As upon the former occasion, Lillian was somewhat in advance of the appointed hour, but, resisting any latent desire to evade the issue, she went directly to the large, round divan in the centre of the gallery and seated herself, her head turned away from the entrance, but keeping her black-gowned figure well in view. Her hand holding the bunch of violets rested over the back

of the divan, a signal as well as a sign. One or two visitors moved softly, fitfully, before her vision in the mellow light, but Lillian, stilled as with doom, paid no heed to their movements. Only her hearing seemed to have retained its power in the, to her, ominous quiet.

And when the moment came his voice alone reached her senses like a disembodied call.

"Miss Bonney."

She turned her head dazedly, the violets dropping unheeded from her hand, and looked, from the white carnation in his buttonhole, up into her husband's face.

Out of their pallor their eyes met in paralyzed incomprehension. The woman was stunned, the man's lips fumbled.

Finally, "Come out of this," he managed to formulate.

She followed dumbly at his heels. But the cool, fresh air upon her cheek and temples revived her, roused her to passionate resentment.

"How—how dare you insult me so?" she stammered as they moved in blind instinct in a homeward direction, her eyes and throat hot with anger.

"Insult you?" he repeated in wide vacuity.

"You—you, my husband—conniving with—that man—to humiliate me in the very eye of the public!"

"What man?"

"What has Owen Marchmont said to you?" She hurled the words at him, never slackening the wild speed of her feet.

"Owen Marchmont? Nothing. I am Owen Marchmont."

She looked at him uncomprehendingly. "I don't understand you," she wailed in utter misery.

For several seconds he gave no response, then the man, quicker at self-command than the woman, "Are you—Elizabeth Bonney?" he asked in biting deliberation.

Her eyes covered the cold mask of his face in eloquent pleading. If she could only have laughed! But she could not. They walked on, side by

side, silent in a stifling struggle of contending thoughts.

At last, "Adam," she murmured hoarsely.

"Lil-ith," came the halting, harsh response.

She stood still and stamped her foot in futile denial of the hateful implication. But no further word was spoken during all the long reach of blocks stretching seemingly toward the glowing westerling light.

They entered the house in silence, mounting the stairs as if by mutual consent, he following her into the little sitting-room where he closed the door behind them. Lillian walked uncertainly to the couch, sat down, and began drawing off her gloves in feverish haste. He stood beside the centre-table, looking down. If he would only look up—perhaps they could both laugh!

But there was something so obdurately passionless in his attitude it seemed to Lillian that, unless she spoke, he would be willing to stand there moveless till the crack of doom.

She made the grand effort. "You owe me an explanation," she articulated finally, the words sticking drily in her throat.

"Yes," he returned, quite without expression. "It won't take long. As I told you on the street just now, I am Owen Marchmont—at least, that is my pen-name."

A low, incredulous laugh escaped her. It apparently fell unnoticed on Adam's ear. "Your pen-name!" she echoed in the same tone. "You who can only express your jocose self through a quotation—who never make a simple assertion without the aid of some trite phrase!"

The stinging, heartless words left a red line on his face like the mark of a lash. But it was evident that they were about to face each other in naked truthfulness, as few people ever face each other, and he advanced to the situation without flinching.

"I accept your appreciation of me as just," he answered quietly. "The manner I assumed with you when I

first met you—a *gaucherie* born of an overwhelming sense of my own gross shortcomings next your exquisiteness—has so grown upon me that in your presence I am lost without it. As you just now intimated, I am also lost—to consideration—with it. But I think that, with very little effort, I shall now be able to repair the breach by other standards."

She drew a deep, hard breath, as though under a cold douche, and when Adam felt that the force of his retort had had its due effect, he continued in his unimpassioned voice, looking rather through her than at her.

"I have known Gleason, the senior editor of *The Lantern*, for a long time. We often lunch together and have had many discussions on the literature of a certain realistic iconoclastic school. The phases of life it holds to view have always held a strong fascination for me. Gleason always seemed struck by my views—by my expression of them as well. As I say, it is the one line of literature in which I am thoroughly versed—the one mode of thought I can analyze with security. It's a queer source of inspiration upon which to depend, I acknowledge, but I am here for explanation, not for analysis. When, about three months ago, Owen Marchmont broke down in harness, Gleason offered me the work, assuring me that I could fill the requirements, and offering as an inducement Marchmont's name, which, being under contract, he, Marchmont, had agreed to leave with them until the contract will have expired—two months from now. I hesitated to accept, thinking of you and your—reputed tastes and distastes, as well as of your innocent valuation of me. But the salary attached was too tempting, in our restricted circumstances, to let slip for a mere matter of *mauvaise honte*, and I, at last, agreed to try it. That has been my night work. I confess to the hypocrisy and deception, but I considered my reasons valid. I always intended telling you when the time seemed ripe—when I could approach you with dignity, with some measure of suc-

cess. I had intended telling you tonight."

His voice drew to a calm pause. To Lillian he stood there like an automaton, a being without life or fire, between whom and herself lay a handful of letters once glowing with mysterious charm, now shriveled to mocking ashes. Her mind regarded them fixedly.

"For two months," she repeated abstractedly, "you have been occupying Owen Marchmont's position. Then it is you who have been corresponding with Elizabeth Bonney."

"I have been corresponding with the author of 'Mere Woman'!—yes."

"And you went to meet—that woman—yesterday—today?"

"I did."

"And you dare denounce me?"

"I acknowledge my—transgression. I am only a man—a man of small experience—of great curiosity, of greater crudity, judged in the light of this sophisticated age, not worth noticing—except as a tendency. How far an Elizabeth Bonney may have led me I do not know. But I am not gauging the affair by any standard. I am striving only to find myself—and you."

Their eyes met without swerving.

"Well," she said at last, bending her head and letting her hands fall wide, and then suddenly meeting his eyes fairly, "since *dénouements* are the cue—I am Elizabeth Bonney."

"So I am forced to believe. I admit I do not understand."

"No. You could not understand. Would it—interest you to understand?"

"I think it would."

"Then, will you please sit down? The ordeal of listening might tax your strength. The story begins somewhat farther back than two months ago."

He seated himself in the deep, chintz-covered, winged chair beside the table, obeying the compelling note in her low, vibrant voice without question.

She had clasped her hands about her knee in a curious abandonment of defiance; she still wore her hat and jacket, and in this untoward bearing

and apparel she seemed to be sitting there on probation, before the throne of judgment. Her dainty figure was tense, her face drawn in hard lines, a hectic flush burned her cheek.

"The case is not so simple as you think," she began sweetly, courteously. "Did you ever hear of one Richard Bonney?"

Under the exaggerated deliberation of her speech Adam detected the beat of her quivering pain, and he answered more gently, "Your father?"

"Yes. Richard Bonney, man of brains, man of talent, charming, bohemian, lawless. *Viveur*, libertine, sensualist, Byronic betrayer of women."

"I did not know."

"Nor I—until two months ago. Strange coincidence, this 'two months ago' into which we have been whirled! Now, some twenty-five years ago this same Richard begat a daughter whom they called Lillian—bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh—mark you, *his* daughter, his only. But the woman Patricia who had borne her for him strove with all her strength to make her *hers*. And the gods laughed at her strivings."

The shadows of evening now unfolded them. The man sat absolutely still, his eyes fastened upon her. The woman, in her fantastic attitude, a distorted smile upon her young face, her gaze uplifted to a point just beyond his quiet head, continued her mocking recital.

"But 'breed is stronger than pasture.' And the woman knew. But she never gave in—she only redoubled her strivings. And because, in the divine economy of things, nothing is lost, her strivings at last apparently bore fruit—sweet, exotic fruit. The girl Lillian seemed her mother reincarnate—so the world esteemed her—refined, exquisite, puritanic in spirit and in act. But the woman knew." She paused, smiling contemplatively at something unseen.

"What did she know?" prompted Adam hoarsely, the dead, white heat of her monotonous intonation affecting him like an incantation.

"She knew that the Frankenstein she had raised was only a Frankenstein, she knew that beneath it lay the living, sentient being, Richard Bonney's daughter. And her one supreme effort was directed against the girl's self-knowledge, or, rather, against her knowledge of her heredity. She feared the added spur of auto-suggestion, for the girl was impressionable, imaginative—also by heredity. But the living Thing she was striving to suppress sprang up again and again, tongue in cheek, derisively smiting her impotent presumption to earth. And because her *disciplined* creature could not understand her own wild outbreaks against restraints, she hated and was ashamed of the badness within her. And in after moments of exhaustion she wrote exalted, aspiring hypocrisies, called poems! 'Poems of Triumph,' she called them. The temporary self-delusion was sublime. But one day, when she had got beyond the playing-truant-from-school and flouting-of-maternal-authority stage, beyond the tempestuous outbreaks against restraints and conventions, her Badness took another form and expressed itself in terms of literature. And she called the offense 'Mere Woman.' And after its perpetration she was, as became Mrs. Bonney's *chef d'œuvre*, ashamed of it—and afraid. And she hid it away from sight, her own, as well as the public's, as an ugly woman tries to cover from view and memory the knowledge of the ugliness of her body. But one day, when the gentle Control, Patricia Bonney, had passed away, a girl, her dearest friend, supplied the explanation, the Grand Excuse for the Badness she had never understood. And then she exulted, *gloried*, in her real self-expression—her hidden self, her disinherited self—her unbaptized, illegitimate sister—Richard Bonney's own—whom she thereupon christened Elizabeth. And the woman Elizabeth, as I have painted her, found favor in your eyes."

The sneering smile came down and rested fully upon his face.

"Don't," he groaned, covering his

eyes with his hand, as much to hide his own pain as her revelation.

She laughed softly, jeeringly.

"Don't," he implored again, springing to his feet. "Don't. You are crazy, crazy, crazy!"

The smile faded from her pale face, he stood so menacing, so passionately dominant over her.

"You have been crazy for over two months," he continued clamorously, with choked utterance. "You have nourished a fixed idea until it has taken complete possession of you, robbed you of your reason, your common sense, and then it ran away with you, *pranced* away with you in high, indecent glee, you clinging desperately to it like a poor, mad thing to her hobby." He strode across the room before her, seeking self-control, and turned again upon the worn, spent creature, sitting bolt upright now, awaiting his judgment.

"Do you imagine for a moment that you are not Patricia Bonney's daughter as well as your father's? Do you imagine that you have not always *loved* the loveliness with which she and nature have endowed you? What if she did fear your knowledge of the thing which has now maddened you? She had probably been so tortured by the thought that she had lost all sense of proportion. What if you did hate school and discipline? Every child with a full supply of animal energy does—it is only the kick of the colt. There's nothing degenerate in that—it's healthy nature. What if you did break out against the soft, shadowy life to which your mother, following her fixed idea, and I, in my selfish blindness, subjected you. It's not your father's dim past, but the present self-centered, lonely conditions that have made this thing possible. You are young, fresh and healthy—you need action, not thoughts, upon which to expend your surplus of emotions. There's nothing degenerate in that. It was only that you got hold of a morbid idea and fitted yourself to it and made your punishment fit the crime—of your father. It shows what cir-

cumstantial evidence may do. The book, which was only the strong, but passing inspiration of a literary imagination, you, at an associated suggestion, interpreted as the expression of your father through you—straightway conceived your heroine to be yourself and thought you could *act* as you had imagined. But you see it wouldn't work. Theory, especially fictional theory, is a thing at which practice, especially when it concerns yourself—or your own—only laughs. We have both proved it."

She smiled pityingly. "You plead well for a foregone conclusion, for the thing you would have it be. Unfortunately, you only cheat yourself with words—words—words."

"You are still delirious. I am quiet now. I see very clearly."

"No. Listen to me, for I know. You did not know I had met Owen Marchmont at Edgeclyffe."

"Lillian—my poor love!"

"No, don't use that tone. I am quite rational. I met the man in the flesh, as Wilfred Page can attest, with all his faults—and fascinations."

"Well?" He was very pale—she was speaking so very low, all the bravado gone from tone and attitude, her head slightly bent as if in submission or supplication, as she continued:

"I—thought him the author of—those letters. It prejudiced me in his favor. He thought me only Lillian Bonney."

"Bonney!"

"The Wynne was in abeyance. He—he forgot it—as I did."

His lips moved in inarticulate question—they gave forth no sound.

She, with bent head, made answer. "The Summer was about us—I let myself go."

"My God, Lillian—Lillian! What are you saying?"

She glanced up, startled. "What are you thinking?" she stammered, wide-eyed.

"I don't know. Only don't use such phrases. 'You let yourself go!' What do you mean by that?"

"I mean that—what in others might

have been only a harmless flirtation—with two such temperaments as Owen Marchmont's and mine——"

"Go on. Did he—kiss you?"

"Why—what do you take me for, sir!"

He fairly gloated over her naïve self-betrayal. Fear went from his heart, chaos was no more. "I can trust you, Lillian," he said, almost tenderly.

"You don't understand—you won't understand," she half-sobbed, trembling in all her limbs. "I—there—in those moments—I *knew* myself—and fled, it is true. But if Owen Marchmont, the man I met in the woods, had met me today, as I thought he would—I would have gone anywhere—to hell with him—if he had asked me!"

"Be still!" His clenched fist striking the table would have annihilated the reverberation of her words with the blow.

"I have no more to say. Now you know me."

He seemed to swallow hard and the next minute he faced her, master of them both.

"I know you, yes. But you don't know yourself. Listen—the mere suggestion of that dog's—dog, I say, but libel the animal in the figure—that dog's kissing—you aroused your repulsion."

"I hate vulgarity."

"You—sicken me!"

At the simple, forceful pronouncement, she slipped, mentally, down, down from the high place where he had always held her to the very gutter of self-esteem. She no longer saw him, only the merciless, scathing voice went on.

"You are the neuroticism of the world run riot. You've turned the analytic process into worse than yellow-journal ends. In some unaccountable way you've become inoculated with the iconoclastic ooze of Ibsen, Shaw and Company, the composite co-respondents of those who have a little knowledge. What you took for a scientific excuse should have been for you a divine warning—that's

where weakness merges into degeneracy. What are you human for if not to improve on mere animal instinct? Don't you count? Or are you nothing but flotsam or jetsam on the shore of destiny? Faugh! Morbid self-indulgence brought on by listening to men hoisted to a height by men too weak for self-control—of the same selfish, lawless propensity as themselves!"

"The men who are the spirit of the times incarnate—the men you uphold as prophets!"

"Not prophets—artists of disillusionment, whose works are poison to a bundle of impressionability like you—you, who, flinging all sense of responsibility to the winds, according to your dogma of hereditary instinct, led by mere physical attractions, would have gone on sinking lower and lower until you'd have made the child you might some day bear a thing mentally, perhaps physically, low, vile——"

A low, mad sound, accompanied by a spring toward him, cut him short. "How dare you speak so of my child! How dare you!" She was advancing upon him in tigerish strides, hands clenched, face directed at him in dangerous fierceness.

He recoiled a step, then stood firm.

"My child, too, please remember," he breathed in response.

Her defiant, uplifted face quivered; she turned from him, back to the couch, burying her face in the mound of cushions in convulsive sobbing.

He did not go to her. He seated himself in a maze of surging, clamoring emotions. Her low sobbing reached him and he half arose again, reseated himself, turned away from her, looking beyond. And, presently, the thing which had moved him as unexpectedly, as profoundly, as it had moved her, found quiet, trembling expression.

"And all but to prosper a poor little violet."

The simple line fell in holy healing from his lips and strangely hushed her passionate weeping. She seemed to be listening. It was quite still in the room until he spoke again in grave pleading.

"Perhaps that is religion. Emotion sometimes sees in a flash truth which can never after be explained. Perhaps that is whither all religions, all ethics, all morality, all the sciences of humanity for humanity, tend: To Prosper Posterity—the religion of parenthood. It should be enough for all human needs and purposes. See: As you account for and excuse yourself on the score of your father, so may your child, some day, account for better—or worse—on the score of his father—or mother. And so must it be eternally—for the child potential or in fact—according to the Law. So let—us be good—for the sake of—the light of an emotion."

She was quite still, and, in the abandon of his own thought, he had almost forgotten her as he sat with face turned to the glooming window in almost priestly ecstasy. But as night drew nearer and touched his consciousness, he returned with a sigh to the exigency of the moment and looked toward her.

"You do not love me—now," he said calmly, but with a sharp indrawing

of breath. "But let us both remember that we have been traveling together on false convictions. You took me for a fool. I took you for a saint. We have found that we are only man and woman. We are also husband and wife. Let us readjust ourselves."

The silence grew deeper. To Lillian it seemed as though she were lying there, broken, among the fragments of a Midsummer madness. And it seemed to her the man sitting so quietly, so patiently there after all the folly of the past and the storm of the hour, had assumed the selfless, serene power of a savior, an earthly savior whom, alone, in all the world, she passionately needed.

Through the dark he felt her come groping toward him, felt her kneeling beside him.

"Adam."

He put his hand out to her lowered head, caught her seeking hands, bent to her trembling whisper.

"Adam, I—I think I've—got religion!"

He laughed, gently reassuring, and drew her closer.



THE FINAL NOTE

By Arthur Stringer

PUSH back the tangled grass and read the stone:
Some life's one sorrow breaking into rhyme,
Where he, the singer of one hour alone,
Wore Song's too heavy crown his little time!

'Tis but these deeper tides of Life and Death
Wake man to brooding wonder, bring the need
Of Music's balm and Song's impassioned breath
That mounts more madly out of hearts that bleed!
And they, the singers of these tranquil years,
Who move our wondering hearts with chords that spring
From no dark deaths and no deep source of tears—
They sing, I know, of their Dead Selves they sing!

A WICKED WOMAN

By Jack London

IT was because she had broken with Billy that Loretta had come visiting to Santa Clara. Billy could not understand. His sister had reported that he had walked the floor and cried all night. Loretta had not slept all night either, while she had wept most of the night. Daisy knew this, because it was in her arms that the weeping had been done. And Daisy's husband, Captain Kitt, knew, too. The tears of Loretta, and the comforting by Daisy, had lost him some sleep.

Now Captain Kitt did not like to lose sleep. Neither did he want Loretta to marry Billy—nor anybody else. It was Captain Kitt's belief that Daisy needed the help of her younger sister in the household. But he did not say this aloud. Instead, he always insisted that Loretta was too young to think of marriage. So it was Captain Kitt's idea that Loretta should be packed off on a visit to Mrs. Hemingway. There wouldn't be any Billy there.

Before Loretta had been at Santa Clara a week she was convinced that Captain Kitt's idea was a good one. In the first place, though Billy wouldn't believe it, she did not want to marry Billy. And in the second place, though Captain Kitt wouldn't believe it, she did not want to leave Daisy. By the time Loretta had been at Santa Clara two weeks she was absolutely certain that she did not want to marry Billy. But she was not so sure about not wanting to leave Daisy. Not that she loved Daisy less, but that she—had doubts.

The day of Loretta's arrival a nebulous plan began shaping itself in

Mrs. Hemingway's brain. The second day she remarked to Jack Hemingway, her husband, that Loretta was so innocent a young thing that were it not for her sweet guilelessness she would be positively stupid. In proof of which Mrs. Hemingway told her husband several things that made him chuckle. By the third day Mrs. Hemingway's plan had taken recognizable form. Then it was that she composed a letter. On the envelope she wrote: "Mr. Edward Bashford, Athenian Club, San Francisco."

"Dear Ned," the letter began. She had once been violently loved by him for three weeks in her pre-marital days. But she had covenanted herself to Jack Hemingway, who had prior claims, and her heart as well; and Ned Bashford had philosophically not broken his heart over it. He merely added the experience to a large fund of similarly collected data out of which he manufactured philosophy. Artistically and temperamentally he was a Greek—a tired Greek. He was fond of quoting from Nietzsche, in token that he, too, had passed through the long sickness that follows upon the ardent search for truth; that he, too, had emerged, too experienced, too shrewd, too profound, ever again to be afflicted by the madness of youths in their love of truth. "To worship appearance," he often quoted; "'to believe in forms, in tones, in words, in the whole Olympus of appearance!'" This particular excerpt he always concluded with, "Those Greeks were superficial—*out of profundity!*"

He was a fairly young Greek, jaded and worn. Women were faithless and

unveracious, he held—at such times that he had relapses and descended to pessimism from his wonted high philosophical calm. He did not believe in the truth of women; but, faithful to his German master, he did not strip from them the airy gauzes that veiled their untruth. He was content to accept them as appearances and to make the best of it. He was superficial—*out of profundity!*

"Jack says to be sure to say to you, 'good swimming,'" Mrs. Hemingway wrote in her letter; "and also 'to bring your fishing duds along.'" Mrs. Hemingway wrote other things in the letter. She told him that at last she was prepared to exhibit to him an absolutely true, unsullied and innocent woman. "A more guileless, immaculate bud of womanhood never blushed on the planet," was one of the several ways in which she phrased the inducement. And to her husband she said triumphantly, "If I don't marry Ned off this time—" leaving unstated the terrible alternative that she lacked either vocabulary to express or imagination to conceive.

Contrary to all her forebodings, Loretta found that she was not unhappy at Santa Clara. True, Billy wrote to her every day, but his letters were less distressing than his presence. Also, the ordeal of being away from Daisy was not so severe as she had expected. For the first time in her life she was not lost in eclipse in the blaze of Daisy's brilliant and mature personality. Under such favorable circumstances Loretta came rapidly to the front, while Mrs. Hemingway modestly and shamelessly retreated into the background.

Loretta began to discover that she was not a pale orb shining by reflection. Quite unconsciously she became a small centre of things. When she was at the piano there was someone to turn the pages for her and to express preferences for certain songs. When she dropped her handkerchief there was someone to pick it up. And there was someone to accompany her in ramblings and flower-gatherings. Also,

she learned to cast flies in still pools and below savage riffles, and how not to entangle silk lines and gut-leaders with the shrubbery.

Jack Hemingway did not care to teach beginners, and fished much by himself, or not at all, thus giving Ned Bashford ample time in which to consider Loretta as an appearance. As such, she was all that his philosophy demanded. Her blue eyes had the direct gaze of a boy, and out of his profundity he delighted in them and forbore to shudder at the duplicity his philosophy bade him to believe lurked in their depths. She had the grace of a slender flower, the fragility of color and line of fine china, in all of which he pleased greatly, without thought of the Life Force palpitating beneath and in spite of Bernard Shaw, in whom he believed.

Loretta bourgeoned. She swiftly developed personality. She discovered a will of her own and wishes of her own that were not everlastingly entwined with the will and the wishes of Daisy. She was petted by Jack Hemingway, spoiled by Alice Hemingway, and devotedly attended by Ned Bashford. They encouraged her whims and laughed at her follies, while she developed the pretty little tyrannies that are latent in all pretty and delicate women. Her environment acted as a soporific upon her ancient desire always to live with Daisy. This desire no longer prodded her as in the days of her companionship with Billy. The more she saw of Billy the more certain she had been that she could not live away from Daisy. The more she saw of Ned Bashford the more she forgot her pressing need of Daisy.

Ned Bashford likewise did some forgetting. He confused superficiality with profundity, and entangled appearance with reality until he accounted them one. Loretta was different from other women. There was no masquerade about her. She was real. He said as much to Mrs. Hemingway, and more, who agreed with him and at the same time caught her husband's eyelid

drooping down for the moment in an unmistakable wink.

It was at this time that Loretta received a letter from Billy that was somewhat different from his others. In the main, like all his letters, it was pathological. It was a long recital of symptoms and sufferings, his nervousness, his sleeplessness, and the state of his heart. Then followed reproaches, such as he had never made before. They were sharp enough to make her weep, and true enough to put tragedy into her face. This tragedy she carried down to the breakfast-table. It made Jack and Mrs. Hemingway speculative, and it worried Ned. They glanced to him for explanation, but he shook his head.

"I'll find out tonight," Mrs. Hemingway said to her husband.

But Ned caught Loretta in the afternoon in the big living-room. She tried to turn away. He caught her hands, and she faced him with wet lashes and trembling lips. He looked at her, silently and kindly. The lashes grew wetter.

"There, there, don't cry, little one," he said soothingly.

He put his arm protectingly around her shoulder. And to his shoulder, like a tired child, she turned her face. He thrilled in ways unusual for a Greek recovered from the long sickness.

"Oh, Ned," she sobbed on his shoulder, "if you only knew how wicked I am!"

He smiled indulgently, and breathed in a great breath freighted with the fragrance of her hair. He thought of his world-experience of women, and drew another long breath. There seemed to emanate from her the perfect sweetness of a child—"the aura of a white soul," was the way he phrased it to himself.

Then he noticed that her sobs were increasing.

"What's the matter, little one?" he asked pettingly and almost paternally. "Has Jack been bullying you? Or has your dearly beloved sister failed to write?"

She did not answer, and he felt that

he really must kiss her hair, that he could not be responsible if the situation continued much longer.

"Tell me," he said gently, "and we'll see what I can do."

"I can't. You will despise me—Oh, Ned, I am so ashamed!"

He laughed incredulously, and lightly touched her hair with his lips—so lightly that she did not know.

"Dear little one, let us forget all about it, whatever it is. I want to tell you how I love—"

She uttered a sharp cry that was all delight, and then moaned:

"Too late!"

"Too late?" he echoed in surprise.

"Oh, why did I? Why did I?" she was moaning.

He was aware of a swift chill at his heart.

"What?" he asked.

"Oh, I . . . he . . . Billy

"I am such a wicked woman, Ned. I know you will never speak to me again."

"This—er—this Billy," he began haltingly. "He is your brother?"

"No . . . he . . . I didn't know. I was so young. I could not help it. Oh, I shall go mad! I shall go mad!"

It was then that Loretta felt his shoulder and the encircling arm go limp. He drew away from her gently, and gently he deposited her in a big chair, where she buried her face and sobbed afresh. He twisted his mustache fiercely, then drew up another chair and sat down.

"I—I do not understand," he said.

"I am so unhappy," she wailed.

"Why unhappy?"

"Because . . . he . . . he wants me to marry him."

His face cleared on the instant, and he placed a hand soothingly on hers.

"That should not make any girl unhappy," he remarked sagely. "Because you don't love him is no reason—of course, you don't love him?"

Loretta shook her head and shoulders in a vigorous negative.

"What?"

Bashford wanted to make sure.

"No," she asserted explosively. "I don't love Billy! I don't want to love Billy!"

"Because you don't love him," Bashford resumed with confidence, "is no reason that you should be unhappy just because he has proposed to you."

She sobbed again, and from the midst of her sobs she cried:

"That's the trouble. I wish I did love him. Oh, I wish I were dead!"

"Now, my dear child, you are worrying yourself over trifles." His other hand crossed over after its mate and rested on hers. "Women do it every day. Because you have changed your mind or did not know your mind, because you have—to use an unnecessarily harsh word—jilted a man——"

"Jilted!" She had raised her head and was looking at him with tear-dimmed eyes. "Oh, Ned if that were all!"

"All?" he asked in a hollow voice, while his hands slowly retreated from hers. He was about to speak further, then remained silent.

"But I don't want to marry him," Loretta broke forth protestingly.

"Then I shouldn't," he counseled.

"But I ought to marry him."

"Ought to marry him?"

She nodded.

"That is a strong word."

"I know it is," she acquiesced, while she strove to control her trembling lips. Then she spoke more calmly. "I am a wicked woman, a terribly wicked woman. No one knows how wicked I am—except Billy."

There was a pause. Ned Bashford's face was grave, and he looked queerly at Loretta.

"He—Billy knows?" he asked finally.

A reluctant nod and flaming cheeks was the reply.

He debated with himself for a while, seeming, like a diver, to be preparing himself for the plunge.

"Tell me about it." He spoke very firmly. "You must tell me all of it."

"And will you—ever—forgive me?" she asked in a faint, small voice.

November, 1906—4

He hesitated, drew a long breath, and made the plunge.

"Yes," he said desperately. "I'll forgive you. Go ahead."

"There was no one to tell me," she began. "We were with each other so much. I did not know anything of the world—then."

She paused to meditate. Bashford was biting his lip impatiently.

"If I had only known——"

She paused again.

"Yes, go on," he urged.

"We were together almost every evening."

"Billy?" he demanded, with a savageness that startled her.

"Yes, of course, Billy. We were with each other so much. . . . If I had only known. . . . There was no one to tell me. . . . I was so young——"

Her lips parted as though to speak further, and she regarded him anxiously.

"The scoundrel!"

With the explosion Ned Bashford was on his feet, no longer a tired Greek, but a violently angry young man.

"Billy is not a scoundrel; he is a good man," Loretta defended, with a firmness that surprised Bashford.

"I suppose you'll be telling me next that it was all your fault," he said sarcastically.

She nodded.

"What?" he shouted.

"It was all my fault," she said steadily. "I should never have let him. I was to blame."

Bashford ceased from his pacing up and down, and when he spoke his voice was resigned.

"All right," he said. "I don't blame you in the least, Loretta. And you have been very honest. But Billy is right and you are wrong. You must get married."

"To Billy?" she asked, in a dim, far-away voice.

"Yes, to Billy. I'll see to it. Where does he live? I'll make him."

"But I don't want to marry Billy!" she cried out in alarm. "Oh, Ned, you won't do that?"

"I shall," he answered sternly. "You must. And Billy must. Do you understand?"

Loretta buried her face in the cushioned chair-back and broke into a passionate storm of sobs.

All that Bashford could make out at first, as he listened, was: "But I don't want to leave Daisy! I don't want to leave Daisy!"

He paced grimly back and forth, then stopped curiously to listen.

"How was I to know?—Boo-hoo," Loretta was crying. "He didn't tell me. Nobody else ever kissed me. I never dreamed a kiss could be so terrible . . . until, boo-hoo . . . until he wrote to me. I only got the letter this morning."

His face brightened. It seemed as though light was dawning on him.

"Is that what you're crying about?"

"N-no."

His heart sank.

"Then what are you crying about?" he asked in a hopeless voice.

"Because you said I had to marry Billy. And I don't want to marry Billy. I don't want to leave Daisy. I don't know what I want. I wish I were dead."

He nerved himself for another effort.

"Now look here, Loretta, be sensible. What is this about kisses? You haven't told me everything."

"I—I don't want to tell you everything."

She looked at him beseechingly in the silence that fell.

"Must I?" she quavered finally.

"You must," he said imperatively. "You must tell me everything."

"Well, then . . . must I?"

"You must."

"He . . . I . . . we . . ." she began flounderingly. Then she blurted out, "I let him, and he kissed me."

"Go on," Bashford commanded desperately.

"That's all," she answered.

"All?" There was a vast incredulity in his voice.

"All?" In her voice was an interrogation no less vast.

"I mean—er—nothing worse?" He was overwhelmingly aware of his own awkwardness.

"Worse?" She was frankly puzzled. "As though there could be!" Billy said—

"When did he say it?" Bashford demanded abruptly.

"In his letter I got this morning. Billy said that my . . . our . . . our kisses were terrible if we didn't get married."

Bashford's head was swimming.

"What else did Billy say?" he asked.

"He said that when a woman allowed a man to kiss her she always married him—that it was terrible if she didn't. It was the custom, he said; and I say it is a bad, wicked custom, and I don't like it. I know I'm terrible," she added defiantly, "but I can't help it."

Bashford absent-mindedly brought out a cigarette.

"Do you mind if I smoke?" he asked, as he struck a match.

Then he came to himself.

"I beg your pardon," he cried, flinging away match and cigarette. "I don't want to smoke. I didn't mean that at all. What I mean is—"

He bent over Loretta, caught her hands in his, then sat on the arm of the chair and softly put one arm around her.

"Loretta, I am a fool. I mean it. And I mean something more. I want you to be my wife."

He waited anxiously in the pause that followed.

"You might answer me," he urged.

"I will . . . if—"

"Yes, go on. If what?"

"If I don't have to marry Billy."

"You can't marry both of us," he almost shouted.

"And it isn't the custom . . . what . . . what Billy said?"

"No, it isn't the custom. Now, Loretta, will you marry me?"

"Don't be angry with me," she pouted demurely.

He gathered her into his arms and kissed her.

"I wish it were the custom," she said

in a faint voice, from the midst of to marry you, Ned . . . dear . . .
the embrace, "because then I'd have wouldn't I?"



AMALGAMATED

By Edwin L. Sabin

SHE met him in the leafy glade,
A sparkling glance she threw him;
And straight (impulsive, foolish maid)
Afoot she hurried to him!

Unless hypnotic power he had
'Tis hard to understand;
But witness her, with manner glad,
Extend to him a hand!

He uttered words—some wizard spell;
And while she stood enchanted,
(The thing is monstrous, quite, to tell),
An ear she also granted!

As still he spoke—this villain bold,
This ogre in disguise—
Entirely 'neath his sway, behold,
She dropped her lustrous eyes!

That wretch! With this, it seems to me,
He should have been contented.
Ah, no; he asked for more, and see
Her lips to him presented!

I fled; nor paused to see the rest
Of such a fearsome biz.
But now 'tis said (a horrid jest)
His *better half* she is!



POSSIBLY

“**T**HIS ridiculous coon song calls some black Matilda a ‘blushing flower.’
Who ever saw a colored girl blush!”

“But she may have been one of those flowers ‘born to blush unseen,’ you know.”

THE DEAD-LINE

By Inez Haynes Gillmore

THE bright September day was making ready for sunset.

Long sallow rays of light came in the western windows, glided along the polished floor of the roomy hall to stretch out into films of faint gold under the thin-legged chairs and tables. From his coign of vantage Crevelin watched them stir the green translucent depths of a huge mirror, lining a wall-space beyond the landing, upstairs.

Above a door opened and shut. He heard the rustle of silk as a woman came down the hall. Mechanically his ear followed each light footstep, while his eye lingered appreciatively on the bold carving of the tarnished mirror-frame.

Suddenly a woman's figure was reflected in the glass. It was Barbara Cady—he knew her in an instant—why, afterward, he always wondered. She came toward the stairs slowly, like one walking in a dream. Her face was moveless, the eyes, fixed straight ahead, drear, blank spots, accenting the composition, made in the dead pallor of her skin, by her sweeping brows, her full, drooped lids and the dense masses of her shadowing hair. She might be, Crevelin thought, for all the life there was in her face, a handsome corpse, too punctiliously dressed.

He arose, still watching the mirror.

Suddenly she started. She reached for the bannister and dropped against it, while she swept the landing with a searching, insistent glance. Then her lids closed. But light and color were flooding revivifyingly into her face. When her eyes opened they were lam-

bent with relief. Her bosom heaved. In the instant she was dazzling.

"How do you do, Miss Cady?" Crevelin heard himself perfunctorily saying, as she came down the stairs.

"Oh, Mr. Crevelin, when did you come—why did they not tell me?"

He held her hand for an instant. Her flesh seared his like a hot iron.

"It's all my fault. Edith told me about the headache. I wouldn't let them wake you. You see, I was able to catch an earlier train. Are you feeling better?"

"Oh, yes; it's all gone now."

"I believe I saw it go—reflected in the mirror." He motioned.

Her smile fixed itself. "Yes, it went then," she admitted. "It's been fully four years, hasn't it, since you've been in New England—oh, you'll find us all so changed. And you—you've been simply everywhere. This last trip—you've been traveling since——"

How she was running on! He interrupted. "My dear lady, since the morning stars first sang together."

"Now," she kept on, taking no heed, "I must add to my remissness as a hostess by running away—unless I'm to be late for dinner." Her gesture made him aware for the first time of her charming *négligée*.

She turned into the library. Again Crevelin listened to each footfall as it lost itself in the swish of her skirt. Suddenly all sound stopped as if she had been struck down. Then it went on.

He seated himself. Mechanically he lighted a cigarette. His mind was in a tumult.

He was the last to leave the dining-

room to follow in the wake of the gleaming shoulders and the laughter that bubbled between the shreds of talk. He was conscious of being *distract*. He had, in a measure, recovered from his surprise of the afternoon, but during dinner he had been too busy gathering and connating his impressions to do more than float where the conversational currents would bear him. For, from the moment of Miss Cady's entrance to the dining-room, when she seemed to dwarf and fade every woman in the room, she had absorbed his entire attention. He had some difficulty in concealing this:

In the library a fire had been kindled. A maid was lighting the many candles. The dusk was faintly odorous of burning bay. He stood a moment on the threshold. Miss Cady had disappeared. He felt a momentary pang. The tête-à-tête that, as the latest arrival, seemed his portion was then not yet to be. Everybody else was settling down to the torpor of the after-dinner hour. The Waylie twins were curled together on a distant couch, their arms about each other's waists.

In the flickering light, with their extraordinary likeness and with the symmetrical opposition of their postures, they looked, alternately, he observed with amusement, like shadow and reality. Near them, on pillows on the floor, the two younger men competed idly for their attention. In the corner Edith Crevelin and her fiancé, Eugene Hart, were absorbed in some new magazines. Mr. Belknap was lost in his *Transcript*. Miss O'Sullivan, a huddle of lavenders and twinkling topazes, sat on a couch near the fire, a screen in one hand, shading her pretty, old face from the blaze.

Crevelin took a place beside her with a sigh of relief. Here, at least, he could find sympathy. Here he could dump all the odds and ends, that made up the tale of his impressions, all the drift-clutter of his receding seas of wonder and surprise. And it would be a study, that was half a game, to

examine them together. She had the understanding mind.

"You're the only person here who's really young, after all," he groaned irascibly.

Miss O'Sullivan laughed her charming laugh. "Hasn't it taken you some time to discover that?"

"I'll make up for that," Crevelin protested, "if you'll only tell me everything you know about our hostess."

The vivacity that made of the lines in his companion's face superficial detail of an entirely decorative old age died out of it. "Oh, Barbara!" she said.

"I remember only a bulky, dark girl, whom I didn't like because I thought she sulked. As interesting as a block of marble. It never occurred to me that there was a woman inside. Certainly nothing like the magnificent creature she is now."

"She is magnificent, isn't she?" Miss O'Sullivan murmured.

"Tell me about her," Crevelin urged.

"My dear!" Miss O'Sullivan was reluctant. "The truth is that I am as much at sea as you are. I've always had a special fondness for Barbara, although, I suppose, she gave me more trouble than any girl who ever came to the school. But the difference in our ages has, upon my word, been not half the barrier that—I realized from the beginning that her abilities would ripen slowly, that her beauty would burst through late, that her character would crystallize with a click, when you least expected it. But I did not expect her to come out as much as she has. And, in fact, she did not come out at all until she left college. Suddenly, then, she bloomed, shone, radiated. After her loss——"

"Her loss?" Crevelin's swift query pulled her up.

"Oh, you are behind, Dana! There was an engagement of some sort lasting a year. The man was drowned two years ago. Since then she has lived here alone, refusing company. Early in the Summer I came at her invitation. Suddenly, now in September, without a word of warning to me, she fills the

house with these children. *Voilà tout!*"

"Did you ever meet—? Ah!"

Miss Cady had come into the room through the unilluminated back library. She was carrying a heavy seven-branch candlestick of brass, lighted. Before any of the men could get to her she had placed it on a little table near the door. She stood for an instant in its flare, panting as if she had hurried.

"Light the back library at once, Sarah," she commanded curtly. "Don't let this happen again under any circumstances. Begin earlier each night, now."

She was a tall, dark woman, who just escaped being too big a one. At one time, Crevelin had been thinking critically, she might also have been too vital. And still her contours were full, her lights high, her textures satin and velvet. There were now, however, incipient lines and hollows tempering the blaze of her coloring. She quieted it further by a long princess gown of dulled velvet that left her arms and neck bare. It was entirely undecorated. The effect was as simple as if a statue had been painted black.

Her face baffled him. For hours it had seemed as expressionless as a mask. But this, he had felt vaguely from the first, was only the superficial immobility of a forced repose. Underneath there was something boding, something sinisterly watchful, expectant. All this was pointed by her strange eyes that had an air of being in retreat behind half-drooped lids and thick concealing lashes. From under these she occasionally raked the room with a glance as swift as a stab of lightning.

She came directly over to Miss O'Sullivan's side. "It's a wonderful night," she said.

Her voice was a low, held-in one. At the end of her sentence it seemed to dissolve into a sigh.

It came to Crevelin suddenly that she had made an appeal to him. "Let's go for a walk in the garden."

Miss O'Sullivan refused promptly. "I've promised Mr. Belknap a game of

chess. I could give it up for you, but I hope you won't ask it of me, Dana."

"And the air is wonderful at this hour," Miss Cady said. Her tone was entreaty, but her look was a command.

"Oh, what pictures!" burst arrestingly from Edith Crevelin. "Say, we've found a stunning ghost-story. Don't you want, Gene, to read it presently?"

"Oh, goody!" "Hurrah!" These from the twins.

"If you want ghosts," Mr. Belknap came out of his *Transcript*, "I'll tell you a story."

There was an excited movement of the whole party toward a common centre.

His hostess turned hurriedly to Dana Crevelin. "Let's go out," she implored. She made a motion toward a wrap that lay over a chair. He took it for her and followed her out.

She drew rapidly away from the house and into a little grassy close, separated from the rest of the terrace by barriers of privet hedge. Inside was a sun-dial and an old carved stone seat. The night air was crisp. Crevelin caught up and threw the lace shawl over her shoulders.

She scarcely paused to allow this. The immobility that lay like a mask on her face was torn away by the revealing moonlight. Her composure seemed to burst suddenly. She began hurriedly to pace up and down the length of the little enclosure, her eyes cast down, her hands clenched. Crevelin stood an instant in embarrassment. Then he threw himself on the seat. At intervals she had violent shuddering spells. Agonies of—horror or despair, Crevelin could not quite decide—writhed like wind-gusts across her face. But she erased each one of them until her features set again into movelessness. Crevelin waited.

"This of course surprises you." She stopped abruptly at his side. "It's nerves, in point of fact. I wanted to get away—I had to get away. And you were the one who knew me least. Can you understand the state of mind which impels a woman to make an ex-

hibition of herself before a stranger rather than to people she knows well?"

"Perfectly." He arose. "Now will you be seated?"

His tranquil air seemed to reassure her. She sank beside him. For several moments she did not speak. "Did you ever feel trapped, caught, caged, confined?"

"In any close room," he admitted, "especially when there are too many women."

She smiled slightly at this. Again she permitted a long, friendly silence. "Now I've had my breath of air, we'll go back."

But he did not move; nor, finally, did she. "Is it the confusion of people?" he asked.

She passed a hand slowly over her face before she spoke. Her manner was vague. "Partly that. I've been too long alone here. And then the room was, as you say, close. There are other things—other—" She sighed and her whole figure drooped in the relaxation of what Crevelin felt to be a second of utter hopelessness. Then she said, "Come."

"Go in first and see if they are reading that ghost-story," she commanded when they reached the door.

Crevelin reconnoitered. "They're popping corn," he announced.

Before going to bed he had a little talk with his sister.

"I wouldn't suggest any more ghost-stories, Edie, if I were you," he said. "Miss Cady made a point of staying away. I think she was nervously excited. Perhaps she doesn't like them."

"It was very thoughtless of me," Miss Crevelin admitted contritely. "In fact, I never thought—in college she was famous for her collection of ghost-stories. Some of them were frightful. I used to crawl into bed shaking with terror, but nothing ever disturbed her. But perhaps her loss has made a difference. And then her two years shut up here——"

"Did you know him?" Crevelin asked casually.

"No, I never happened to meet him.

But the other girls say he was most fascinating—Barbara was simply crazy about him."

"Did you ever meet him?" As Crevelin handed Miss O'Sullivan her tea he took their conversation up just where, the previous day, he had left it. It was characteristic of their temperamental sympathy that they rarely had to use proper nouns, even after long absences and distracting interruptions.

"Several times."

"Did you like him?"

"My dear!" Miss O'Sullivan's eyebrows made the expostulatory gesture denied her hands busy with the sugar and the cream. "I hated him. And I can't tell why. He was a good-looking creature, tall, slender, graceful as a rapier, and quite as quick. And besides, he had exquisite manners—almost as good as yours. And you know my weakness there. I think he rather liked me, too. But you've known cat-women, haven't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, he"—she brought her phrase out triumphantly as if it were peculiarly illuminating—"he was a cat-man. Not small and petty at all, but essentially feline in a big, masculine way. Not like a lion or a tiger. He was a leopard, my dear."

"But he loved her?"

"Loved her? She was an obsession, a fetich, a disease with him."

"And she?"

"You should have seen them together to realize what he could make of her. You saw only a block of marble. He saw the woman inside. He made her breathe. He taught her how to talk. He taught her how to laugh. And suddenly she became—oh, your own adjective—magnificent."

"And yet," Crevelin fixed his eyes on his companion's face, "it isn't his death."

Miss O'Sullivan put her cup down, half-way to her lips.

"It isn't his death," Crevelin repeated.

Miss O'Sullivan drank deliberately. Then she toyed thoughtfully with her

spoon. The topazes on her shapely hands made winking byplay.

He did not let her off. "It isn't," he began patiently.

"No, my dear, it isn't his death," she agreed finally, meeting his eyes frankly.

"What makes you think so?" He put a shrewd accent on the "you."

She waited a moment, pursing up her lips and frowning a little. "Well—one reason—at the end she loathed him."

Crevelin considered this. "Remorse?" he hazarded.

Miss O'Sullivan's "No!" fairly rang.

Crevelin mused, his untasted tea cooling in his hands. He had been separated from his hostess by the length of luncheon and the better part of the afternoon. He acknowledged frankly to himself that he was longing for another tête-à-tête. The juvenile end of the party bored him to extermination. Fortunately the twins were quite content with their Harvard seniors. At that moment they were engaged in a stock trick, one that turned on their resemblance to each other. His eyes fell absently on their group and then strayed beyond them to where Barbara, at the other end of the room, her back to him, sat at the table. The afternoon sun made an intricate dazzle of the silver tea-service, among which her long, beautiful hands lay as inert as dead things.

Her figure had crumpled a little in her chair. He could not see her face, but every tense muscle, every taut nerve in her back apprised him of her expression. He knew she was staring with wide, despairing eyes straight ahead. As if a rope had been thrown about his waist and were pulling him in her direction, he felt impelled to go to her assistance. By a definite effort of his will he prevented himself from jumping up from his seat. He made himself seem to saunter to her side.

"May I have another cup?" he asked urbanely.

The face she turned to him, to his great surprise, was calm, even. It

was almost blank. As though his motion had whetted the appetites of the others, they, too, came surging about. He saw his anticipated tête-à-tête disappearing into the dressing-for-dinner hour.

But it came, after all, in an unexpected way and at an unexpected time. Everybody else had gone to bed and he was walking in the garden, leisurely smoking his last cigar. On an impulse he turned into the fantastic little pagoda that formed the nucleus of several paths. There he came upon his hostess. She was seated on a rustic seat, in an attitude so obviously that of despair that he made a tentative motion to withdraw. Evidently his start carried to her ears. She stirred, but she did not lift her head.

"Oh, leave me, leave me!" she burst out. "My mind will give way under this strain. I must be alone. I cannot stand it much longer."

Crevelin stood stock-still, embarrassed. The moon came out and shone full on her face. It was white and drawn. Her eyes had closed.

"Miss Cady," he said quietly, "you must understand that I can't leave you while you are in this condition."

Her eyes flashed open. "I—I—I—" Her rapid glance swept the close like a tongue of fire. "You are right. I must not. Wait for me."

As he looked, her composure flooded back. She was like an alabaster vase filling slowly with a rose-colored fluid. "Let us go in." She smiled strangely.

After the wonderful tête-à-tête that followed their entrance into the house, he felt that there was a new bond between them. In their talk, prolonged until after midnight, they had gone far. He made no allusion to the scene that had preluded it. But by offering her his services he tacitly took it for granted that there was something definitely wrong. She had as tacitly admitted it by, without explanation, declining them. He did not feel offended, for that, in some subtle, inexplicable way, she clung to his sympathy he was all the time vividly aware. In the week that followed Crevelin

felt that bond strengthen. He had a curious feeling that their little alliance cut them away from the rest of the party. The others were far off in the sunshine—they two had drawn together in the strange loneliness of the shadow. He wondered often if his hostess realized the depth of their spiritual intimacy. That she admitted it, consciously, he could question. Her unconscious acknowledgment of it was almost naïve. He felt her eyes on him at every move. They flew to his face whenever he entered a room. He felt them at his back whenever he left it. Often he came gradually to notice, when he took a seat at one end of the long library, she would change her position with no other ostensible purpose but that of being nearer him. More curious than anything in the strange affair was the fact that, although his judgment was pushing him toward several interesting conclusions, his intuition refused to permit him to jump to the obvious one.

"Dana," Edith said to him in their farewell talk, the night before the party broke up, "there is something wrong with Barbara Cady. Have you noticed it? I don't know what it is, but it's something."

"I think she is an unusual woman," he said, with guarded smilingness, "if that's what you mean."

"Of course it isn't what I mean," Edith declared indignantly. "There's something on her mind—if she ever sleeps she doesn't show a sign of it. Did you ever see anybody look so 'morguey' in the morning? And often the strangest look comes into her eyes. I can't describe it. It's diabolic. It's like—I don't know what it is like. Haven't you ever seen it?"

"I think her whole expression is a peculiar one—if that is what you mean."

"Please don't say 'if that's what you mean' again. No, not that holding-herself-in look. This is something quite different. It comes there without the slightest warning. It's as distinct and different as the look of madness."

"Edith! Edith!" her brother admonished her.

"No, I'm not imagining things. It happens often, and she herself knows when it comes—she always turns her head away. When she turns back her face is like marble. Eugene has noticed it several times since I pointed it out. It never has happened when you've been in the room because I've been watching for a long time to see the effect on you. But I didn't know but what some time when you were alone— The truth of the matter is," she concluded, with a feminine leap ahead, "that you take her mind off of whatever's on it—her trouble—her secret—whatever it is."

"Secret! Trouble!" her brother chaffed her.

"I asked Miss O'Sullivan about it," Edith meditated. "She said she'd never noticed it. But she lied. I didn't study her face for four years at school for nothing." She gave a quick look into her brother's eyes before she dropped her own bright ones. "Don't you think you'd better come up into the mountains with me, Day?" she asked earnestly.

"No, my dear," he pronounced, with pleasant inflexibility. "This place rests me. I'm going to take rooms at the Samoit Inn for an indefinite stay."

But, although he chaffed his sister, their talk lingered with an indefinable effect of corrosion in his mind as he made his way down to the library. The detail of Miss O'Sullivan's mendacity, he found, on reflection, to be the main trouble, especially as his sense of honor peremptorily forbade him to question his old friend. He had been absolutely truthful in stating to his sister that he had never noticed the look in Barbara's eyes that she had so often found there. But he, of course, more definitely than she, had the evidence of a baneful secret grief. Beyond that he was as much at sea as Edith.

He walked up and down the long, book-lined room in a fever of conjecture. As a lawyer might review the evidence in a case, he went over

each impression of the strange woman who had so obsessed his imagination. But, in spite of his judicial point of view, he kept looking at each successive event in the light of his sister's remark.

"The truth of the matter is that you take her mind off what's on it—her secret—her trouble—whatever it is." It kept ringing in his ears.

He walked to the book-case and absently touched a volume here and there.

"It's this gloomy old place," he meditated frowningly. "I don't wonder that the candles are lighted at the first hint of dark—it's impossible to get any sunshine into it."

Again he walked the length of the long room, puzzling over what had become a burdensome enigma to him. He shook his head resolutely at last and sank into the chair with the book that he had brought with him from the case. But the clock struck midnight before he could lose himself in it.

His attention was caught, after a while, by a sound in the hall. He listened. Nothing. His eyes dropped again to the book. Again—but it was not a sound—something impelled his look up. Barbara was standing in the doorway.

He was conscious at first only of the glaring incongruity of her long loose gown, rose-colored and lace-trimmed, with the greenish pallor of her sodden face. For that she had wept until the fountain of her tears had dried up was patent even to the masculine observation.

She looked directly into his eyes.

"I couldn't stand it any longer," she gasped. "I thought I might find somebody—I heard a sound—I thought, perhaps, you had not gone to—"

He forestalled the humiliation of the confession she was about to make. He led her to a chair. "Don't talk yet," he commanded briefly. He turned and walked to give her time to recover.

"Don't go away from me," she begged, flashing up from her chair.

He turned, and smiled. "Do you

think it likely?" But he came back and seated himself on the rug at her feet.

She covered her face with both her hands. For a pause neither spoke. Then she let the dazzle and flush of her regained spirits burst upon him.

"Talk to me," she said.

It was nearly dawn before he let her go, and, after she had left him, he still stood watching the long-dead fire. Suddenly his face lighted up. "Edie's right," he said aloud. "I take her mind off—I do something." His brow wrinkled. "But what?"

After the departure of the others he saw Barbara more frequently and more intimately. Miss O'Sullivan, who alone stayed on, formed the gracious third of their combination. Untrammelled by the presence of the rest, with the wonderful simplicity that characterized her, Barbara was perfectly free about showing him that his presence was pleasing to her, that she looked for him every day, that she was actually disappointed if he were detained. But Crevelin continued to be as much puzzled as encouraged by this. It had a curious impersonal quality that baffled him. He found it hard to formulate to himself, but it was as if it were more his presence than he himself that she wanted. She never once helped in his efforts to precipitate a tête-à-tête, and, occasionally, it seemed to him she put deliberate obstacles in their way. To offset this, he had the pleasure of seeing her face, always pale and wan when he arrived, grow younger and more vital the longer he stayed with her. He saw that, more and more, she seemed unwilling to sit any distance from him whenever they were together. He heard her hold out glittering temptations to bring him early each day to her presence, and he saw her employ many pretty and innocent devices to keep him by her side after he had announced it as his intention to leave. Few men could resist the effect of such charming evidence. Crevelin did not intend to resist it long. His proposal ached on his lips. He realized with

shame, when the telegram arrived that urged him, because of his mother's illness, to return immediately to town, that he was first conscious of dismay that his absence might lose him an opportunity to declare himself.

His eagerness and the rebound of his spirits after his mother's swift recovery, compelled him to wave away the carriage-men who competed for his patronage at the Samoit station—to take the short cut that would bring him to Barbara a few minutes earlier than she could expect him. He came out through the woods at the side of the house and made his way to the vine-encumbered side-piazza. The windows were all down, but through one of them he caught a sidewise glimpse of Barbara that made him pause.

She was moveless, her eyes fixed, her look of stony endurance making her face a mask of grayish marble. As he stared she arose and walked to the front window, looking longingly up the driveway. The leap his heart gave told him that she was watching for his coming. She turned. She came back, her features writhing. In an instant the expression cleared itself away. The look of relief that took its place was equally excruciating. There was, in her air, an abandonment to it that was almost pagan. She flashed a glance as swift as quicksilver about the empty room.

Unexpectedly he had a feeling against seeming to have spied upon her. He made a noiseless way from the piazza, through the front door, to the entrance of the library. Barbara had seated herself at the other end. Again her profile, fixed in horror, stared straight ahead. Something withheld him from sound of greeting. His approach made no footfall on the thick rug. Again suddenly her expression broke. Relief softened it to a human thing. But she did not turn.

An idea, scarcely formed as yet, that would presently, he knew, take giant form in his mind, came into being there. He went back a little way.

Her face seemed to freeze. The eyes closed, opened and closed.

"Barbara!" he called triumphantly.

She arose like a flame to a draft. She faced him full. She held out her arms.

"Oh, come," she breathed. "I never needed you more."

"What is it?" he demanded. "Tell me now!"

"Come nearer," she said.

He took a few steps and stopped. Her narrowed eyes went beyond him and watched during the instant of his approach. Then her face, glowing like a flower, burst through her marble mask. "Oh, don't you know?" she breathed.

His intuition ran amuck.

"Is it here now?" he asked.

She replied as directly as a child and with a child's accent. "No, he's gone."

"Oh, *that*! But it was here?"

"Yes, until you passed the dead-line."

"And then?"

"He vanished. He can never appear after you've crossed that. You always put him out like a candle."

"Am I the only one who can do that?"

"The only one."

"Have I always done it?"

"From the moment you came."

He pondered the wonder of this. "How long has it been coming?"

"Ever since the night he was drowned. I found him waiting in my chamber for me, when I went to bed."

He sat down beside her. He took her hand and leaned his forehead against it. "God, I understand so much now!"

"Oh, the relief that you know at last! Now you realize why I've clung to you—why I've made you come as early as possible—why I've kept you late—how I must always sit with you between me and the dead-line."

"I think I've been realizing vaguely for a long time. I knew it wasn't I that you wanted."

"The horror of it! It's malign, deadly—ah, indescribable! To be

always expecting— Nothing could shut him out."

He took her hands into his strong clasp. "If you are not looking, how do you know when——?"

"A sense of presence as definite as an odor. I may be reading a book when it comes; I look up, and there, standing in front of me—or I am entertaining company, perhaps, and enjoying my one little merciful moment of freedom; suddenly it steals upon me; that shiver in the air; that baleful feeling of an alien thing near. I look up, and there, apart from my guests——"

"I see—the candles." He drew his breath in sharply.

"He accompanies me through the halls when I go from room to room—I can't endure him so well in the dark when I can only feel, as in the light when I can freely see."

She withdrew her hand to cover her eyes. In a moment she revealed her calmed face to him.

He held her eyes. "Does it ever touch you?"

"Never."

"And if I should go beyond the deadline now—it would come?"

"As inevitably as tomorrow."

"Do you know what that distance is?"

"To a hair's breadth."

"I will never go beyond it again."

But the telegram which, that afternoon, apprised him of his mother's sudden relapse and called him to her death-bed, of course, took him immediately from Barbara's side. His mother lingered only a few days. The funeral and the business that, as an only son, devolved upon him kept him in town a week. Barbara, at his request, sent him cipher telegrams twice a day. Their invariable message, the only brightness in his ten dark days, was "He has not come yet."

He took the first train that went to Samoit, after his work was done, advising Barbara of his coming, first, by telegram. At Blickling, half-way down, there was a slight accident. Crevelin found out immediately that the train

would be stalled for several hours. He hurried to a livery-stable and hired its fastest team. Half-way from Blickling to Samoit the lathered horse went suddenly lame. He left the team with a sympathetic farmer and tore on foot over the remaining four miles of the journey. The last quarter of a mile his heart pounded and his head swam; but it was not from fatigue.

As he came up the driveway he saw Barbara, black-garbed, standing in the frame of the open window. Her face looked like a death-mask hanging there—it seemed as if the breeze that fanned his cheek must pass through the black, empty caverns that were her eyes, her nostrils, her slack-hung mouth. He broke into a run. The mask fell backward as if withdrawn from behind. He leaped over the sill.

Her swoon was brief and she was complete mistress of herself when her eyes opened. He lifted her to the couch and sat beside her, holding her hand.

"Don't tell me yet," was his only behest.

Her voice was faint when she began. She paused to take gulping mouthfuls of air. But her tone was clear, was sure.

"He did not come until three hours ago—just before you were due from the train. He waited until the last moment, hoping to be able—but he could not—he was almost near enough——"

"Near enough for what, Barbara?"

"To touch me."

Crevelin uttered a sharp exclamation. But he controlled himself at once.

"I had to send Miss O'Sullivan away. He kept getting between her and me. For an hour I lay face down on the couch; for an hour I walked up and down this room; for an hour I watched the window for you. I knew either that you had died or there had been an accident. Where?"

"At Blickling—the train. You say he was nearer? How could that be?"

"Because he stayed away for ten days. That's the only way he can develop power. Do you understand?"

"As if he has to run back to get a start?"

"Yes."

"How was it before I came?"

"When we were alone in this house—he and I—he came less often. I had intervals of rest—he of growing strength—so that when he did appear he could get a little nearer."

"And if people were with you?"

"He stayed always—but he was much farther off. Oh, I understand so well the rationale of this obsession of mine—I've worked it out as carefully as any problem in geometry. He has two malignant impulses—one to come so constantly that my mind will break under the strain—or to stay away so long that he can make a dash——"

"Make a dash? I see. To gain momentum."

"If he ever gets near enough to touch me——" Their eyes met in a long look. "That is what he wants to do. He could not do that today—not quite—another day and——" Her hands fluttered in her lap. Then they lay there, inert. "In the end, he may prefer to drive me to suicide. His confederates could aid there."

"Confederates?" For a moment Crevelin's voice was staccato. He deepened it instantly. "Tell me—tell me all—*all*, you understand, Barbara."

"He has confederates, I am certain—malevolents, too. I cannot guess how many."

"How do you know that?"

"Sometimes when we are alone—he and I—ah, now you'll think me mad"—she smiled a little shadowy smile—"books have moved an appreciable distance. Doors shut leisurely. Chairs rock for a few moments. But he does not do that. It is the others."

"What are *they* doing?"

"They are all experimenting with me—pushing me—driving me——"

He drew a long breath. "When did this happen last?"

"Not since you came." She reached over and took both his hands. "And he has lost steadily. Before he would leave me at times, though for never

longer than three days. Since you came he has been with me parts of every day—whenever you left, in brief. For him to stay away ten days—there was something malefic in it. I suspected when he returned——" She broke off.

He left her to walk restlessly up and down. But not once did the absorption of his kindled spirit carry him beyond a certain line in the rug. She sat back and watched, relaxed, secure.

"It will be a glorious fight," he muttered. "And I shall win. I'll give it a run for——" He stopped and stared at her. "Of course I shall never leave you again." His sure tone held an undercurrent of perplexity. "Ah!" His frown broke. "You will stay up all night with me, and tomorrow we shall be married. Miss O'Sullivan will attend to all the business of it for us."

She had her stormy night-long session of protest against what she persisted in calling his sacrifice, but in the end his will prevailed. They were married the next afternoon.

They found in a large apartment-house in Boston two rooms that formed its corner, opening without doors, without partitions, one into the other. Their longest dimension came a little beyond the dead-line, but this drawback was overcome by a cunning arrangement of the furniture. One was living-room, dining-room, kitchen. The other was bedroom and dressing-room. Out of the latter there was a bath room.

The rooms had an attractive outlook—the sun flooded through one or the other of their windows all day long—and Crevelin's taste had made them unique with the fastidious spoils from his travels. He had asked Barbara to bring nothing with her into their new life that could suggest the past five years.

By tacit consent neither of them referred to the conflict which they had joined forces to wage.

Here they lived a life that, in Crevelin's phrase, had only two dimensions. On his plea that he could not govern his actions in another's house, they

eschewed all social affairs. That there could be no possible contretemps taking him from her side, they entertained nobody but Miss O'Sullivan. But they went to the theatre and to lectures, they took long walks together, they played all kinds of indoor and outdoor games. They studied. They read aloud to each other.

The degree of their intimacy was, of course, extraordinary, and it had the unexpected effect of deepening their feeling for each other. Barbara's love for him was of a nature that touched and enchanted Crevelin, afresh, each time he analyzed it. She clung to him with the trusting faith of a child. She adored him with the indiscriminating ardor of a young girl. She gave herself up, body, heart, mind and soul, with the proud freedom of a spirited and warmly-sexed woman.

In Crevelin her clinging dependence aroused all that was finest and best, but, beyond that, the stimulus of her mentality, the poise of her character, her charm as mere woman made his voluntary imprisonment a perpetual Arabian Nights' entertainment. He had the experience common to lovers of finding that memory had, apparently, obliterated all real sense of the years he had lived without her, that he could not project his imagination into a possible future that should be void of her. He tried consciously to catch the gleam of the false lights of his bachelorhood that so misled this dawn. And, comfortingly, he argued that, after the intimacy of their life together, there could be no real separation. Where one went, the other must go, so inextricably were they bound together.

Crevelin never once went beyond the dead-line.

Things were happening constantly in their bilateral world, however, that seemed to compel him to leave her side; telephone-calls and telegrams that pleaded the exigency of his business interests, making appointments in places and circumstances that debarred Barbara from going, arrived frequently. His adroitness always rescued him from the necessity of answering them

in person. And, sometimes, the senders of these messages would afterward confess there was really not such pressing need of his presence as their own words would seem to indicate. They laughed at the remembered urgency of their appeal and wondered frankly why they had written in that tone. Things that would have taken most men away happened even closer to them. Three times there was an alarm of fire in the house. Once the men of several of the apartments were requested to assist in anticipating the alarm by checking a small but vigorous blaze. Crevelin was one of these, but he did not respond. Twice, late at night, there were street fights under their window, with piercing calls for help. Often Crevelin awoke from a malevolent nightmare, in which somebody, always dearly beloved and in danger, was calling for help just outside in the hall. He told Barbara nothing of this.

One morning, a year after their marriage, Crevelin sat at his desk writing. Barbara lounged near with a book. Presently she arose. Crevelin glanced up with the quick scrutiny that examined her every move.

She stood in the pour of the sunlight, proudly defying the glare with the shadowing masses of her hair and the radiance of her wonderful eyes. Crevelin observed critically that there was not a sign of strain in her serene expression or in her carefree air. He listened to the sound of her footsteps as she walked across the room.

"What are you doing?" he called when they stopped.

"Only making the bed," she called cheerily.

He returned to his writing. Presently he moved over to the book-case that stood against the farthest wall. He reached up to take the volume in which he remembered leaving the letter he was answering, from the top. The book opened in his careless handling. The letter, with an almost deliberate cant, fell sideways behind the case.

There was just space enough between it and the wall of the niche in which it stood for Crevelin to slip into, and by a vigorous lift, pull and push to move it a little from the wall. He knelt down there groping for the letter. At that moment a heavy Mexican lasso, that hung above on the wall, fell on him, coiling about his figure like a thing humanly directed. He stumbled and tripped, falling his length in the slit. In the second that he fell, a curious sound was borne to his ears, half a mew, half a groan. He wondered idly—his scalp prickled and the hair of his head rose with a stealthy gliding motion.

With a supreme effort he struggled to his feet and pushed against the book-case. It went over with a crash. He leaped across the debris. He rushed into the other room, tearing the rope from his body.

A wan silence hung over everything there. Barbara lay on the bed. He knew that she was dead before his hand found the stilled heart.

"I'm coming, Barbara!" he called as he closed her lids over the look in her eyes. "By God, I'll beat you this time!" he ground out in another tone, as he ran over to his desk. He wrenched open the upper drawer. He took out the revolver that lay there.



THE WAIL OF A WAITRESS

By Ethel M. Kelley

HE has not came—not ever since the day
 He got so huffy that he went away
 Because I wouldn't promise not to gad.
 I didn't know 'twas in him to stay mad,
 Though I said things I didn't oughter say.

He oughter knew that I was haf in play;
 He'll have to wait till he is good and gray
 Before I'll ever tell him I feel sad.
 He has not came.

He oughter think life ain't so very gay;
 It ain't so easy cartin' this big tray!
 He was the only beau I ever had.
 Oh, dear, I guess I got it pretty bad.
 How shall I know if he has went to stay?—
 He has not came!



PRESENTING THE BRIGHT SIDE

HE—The critics say that my new novel is trash.
 SHE—Cheer up! Maybe it will sell like trash.

BY HASBAN'S MARGE

By Clinton Scollard

THERE is a lime by Hasban's marge
Ancient of days and lordly large,
And when within the Syrian sky
The bright sun burns like Allah's targe,
It's O beneath the boughs to lie,
Unheeding how fleet time foots by!

Thus lay I at the prime of noon;
The mountain breezes were aswoon,
Aswoon the lyrics of the tree—
Its leafy laughter low of tune;
And in the red anemone
Hushed was the burden of the bee.

And one soft stirred the zither strings
Whose voice was like the Jordan springs,
Whose cheeks revealed the sunset glow
That shows upon the rose that flings
Its petals to the winds that blow
At twilight-tide o'er Jericho.

She sang of love, and in her eyes,
Lo! its eternal-tender dyes!
She sang, and in her trancing tone,
Lo! all love's deepest ecstasies
Borne adown almond alleys lone
In some far paradisal zone!

There is a lime by Hasban; fain
Am I beneath its boughs again
To dream the dream that maid and man
Dreamed to love's rapturous refrain
When through the veins Youth's ardors ran
That golden noontide Syrian!



THE UNFORTUNATE

“WAS the audience carried away by his voice?”
“Not all of them—about six stayed to hear him finish.”

LANCELOT

By Dorothea Deakin

“SUPPOSE,” said Lise sharply, “that we agree to leave each other alone. We’ve got to make the best of a bad job, and the sooner we arrange how it’s to be done the better. You go your way and I’ll go mine.”

“Likely to turn out the broad path we’ve heard so much about, don’t you think?” her husband suggested lazily. He didn’t care how things were settled if only Lise wouldn’t worry.

“Not at all,” said Lise. “We shall be happy enough if we take care that the paths don’t cross or meet. We’ve stumbled into this absurd marriage like a couple of blind children, and now that we can see, it’s too late to save ourselves. If I’d known how carefully it had all been arranged for us, I’d rather have—” She stopped in a belated consideration for the man who had been as little to blame as she had.

“Died?” suggested he. “So would I. You’ve got the devil’s own temper, Lise.”

“Temper!” cried she furiously. “Thank God, I have some spirit. If I were to sit there smoking like a stupid old cow——”

“Wouldn’t be becoming to your style,” said he placidly.

She stamped her foot.

“Oh, I’d rather be a cabbage growing in a garden than feel so little one way or another, as you do.”

“I’d rather live with a thousand cabbages in a hundred gardens than listen eternally to a person who feels so much—or says she does.”

Lise sat down suddenly in a chair by the table and laid her head on her

arms. He wondered if she were crying, but he rather thought not. He had often—lately, indeed, very often—seen her furious, but he had never seen her cry. Thank God, he was spared that. Red eyes had no appealing charm for him, he told himself. He wondered if there were many women who wore themselves and their relations out with such impotent and uncalled-for furies. Presently she raised her little white face, and he saw that her eyes were no longer angry.

“We can’t separate openly,” she said slowly, “because of your mother, Jack. She is so very happy, isn’t she, in *our happiness*? And she arranged our lives so beautifully for us with my father. Now that she is so ill— No, we can’t separate yet.”

“No.” He spoke gently, refilling his pipe as he spoke.

“We must just agree to differ.” Her voice broke into a curious little laugh. “We must go our own ways with our own friends, and try to be civil at meal-times. I wonder how it is that we quarrel so much more than we did when we were free?”

“See too much of each other, perhaps,” her husband suggested amiably.

She walked over to the window and stood with her back to him in silence for a long time.

“I ought,” said her husband slowly, “to have foreseen this. I have made such a mess of my life all through that I ought to have expected an unhappy marriage to put the finishing touch. But it’s hard on you, Lise, to be dragged down with me. I might have had the sense to carry out my young

promise alone. Oh, I don't mind admitting that it's hard on you."

"I married you," Lise said, "because I should have had to go out as a governess or secretary or something awful, if I didn't. And I don't know anything. I can't teach anything. I was told by all my relations that marriage was the only happiness for a woman, and that you were suitable in every way. You were so good-tempered! How was I to know that your good temper was enough to drive me mad?"

"How, indeed?" said Jack calmly. "I married *you* because if I hadn't my allowance would have been cut off, and I should have had to work for my living. I would rather die than do that. All because of a sentimental early Victorian attachment *my* mother had for *your* penniless father. I was told that you were an ideal wife; a high-spirited, handsome, good-hearted English girl. And it is all true. Except that—well, high spirits, I suppose, is a pretty name for—"

"Temper!" Lise cried. "Don't be afraid of the word, Jack. You aren't generally."

"No," he admitted frankly; "that was exactly what I was going to say."

"Well?" His wife turned round and faced him. "It has been a business management all through. We've married for money, both of us—you for your own, I for yours. Now we've got it; and it doesn't make us happy! I don't suppose it ever does make people happy. We've paid for it, too."

"I dare say there's plenty of happiness left for you in the world," her husband said cheerfully, "if I keep out of your way, Lise. Cheer up. I'm dining out tonight."

"Has it ever occurred to you that we've lost something by this fine business arrangement?" Lise asked slowly, with a queer little side glance at him.

Jack looked puzzled.

"Liberty, do you mean?"

"We've each lost rather a good friend, Jack." Her voice saddened as she spoke.

"You mean?"

"In each other. We were pretty good friends, before—before you were—persuaded to propose to me, weren't we?"

"Oh, well," he laughed as he took up his book again, "we might in time even drift back to that happy state of affairs. Who knows?"

"We shall never do that," said she. "You see it was an illusion, and one—well, one doesn't get back one's illusions. Once lost they're lost forever."

"You're quite a poet in your way," her husband murmured absently.

It was about a month after this that Standing first noticed that his wife was taking him at his word, going her own way, finding an interest and an amusement to distract her mind, to drown the memory of their bitter, irrevocable mistake. I am, however, bound to say that her way surprised him. He had not expected her to find the making a fool of a nice, simple-minded boy like young Lancelot so wholly engrossing as she obviously did. He liked young Lancelot and thought it a pity that Lise should hurry so to take the first freshness of the gilt off his boyish gingerbread. At the Kellermanns' garden-party he first noticed Lancelot's devotion, and he watched the two of them with an awakened interest, lazily, for he did everything lazily. It was hot, too, and he was even more bored than usual; more than ever tired of himself.

"She is a hard little devil," he said, "but she's pretty, too. Jove, how pretty she is today!"

But it wasn't only prettiness he saw in Lise. She crossed the lawn in front of him just then, slim and erect, in something soft and gleaming and pearly with green lights in it, and she caught, as she passed him, the white ruffly thing which was slipping from her shoulders, and turned to say something kind to the young man at her side. She wore a little exquisitely becoming tip-tilted hat, with a veil arranged as only Lise could arrange a veil, and her heavy black hair was twisted and coiled with wonderful

effect on the nape of her slim neck. She was more than pretty; she was elegant, excellent in every detail, most satisfying and restful to the eye, with her little pale face and red sulky mouth and soft dark eyes smiling under her Dolly Varden hat.

"Pity young Lance doesn't see her in a rage," her husband murmured. "That'd settle *his* hash, if he only knew it."

It was a long time since he had felt so keen an interest in anything as he felt in this new development of his wife's. He was not annoyed, certainly not jealous; because of course he had no feeling for his wife at all except perhaps a little pity, and a decided relief that he was now to be let alone, and worried no more. Worry was certainly the worst evil of life, and Lise was the queen and goddess of all worriers. And if he now began to remember how much she had seen of this boy lately, how constantly they had been together at every turn, his strongest emotion was pity for young Lancelot, who was being made a fool of.

"She's like a little panther," he said, with a sigh; "all softness and purring in the sunshine, when things go well, and all steel springs and rages underneath—with a heart—oh, good Lord, if it is a little bit of rock, it's all the better for her. It'll keep her from fretting over the rottenness of the mistake we've made between us."

But the result of the unwonted activity of this strain of thought merely made him determined to leave her alone, to let her go her own way. If young Lancelot paid the piper for the tune she had called—well, he'd got to find out that life wasn't all strawberries and cream, sooner or later.

He had then, you see, not the faintest premonition that Lise herself might suffer. No doubt as to the toughness of her hard heart assailed him. But presently he began to see that the situation was developing.

It was in July down at Marybeach that he first wondered. Lise was changing in some indefinable way. Her eyes grew softer, her manner more

gentle—even to him. She gave up making bitter speeches. Lancelot, staying at their hotel, drove and motored and golfed with them every day. The hotel was full of their friends, and he was hardly ever alone with Lise, of course, but he was, in all her amusements, her devoted attendant. Jack was too lazy to do anything but loaf about the beach after his morning bath, to carry out his usual rôle of indifferently amused looker-on, but it was not until the middle of the month that he first began to wonder whether it might not be better to take a more active part in the matter.

Lancelot had been dining at their table as usual, and after dinner had gone out with Lise to the long terrace. There was a cold wind blowing from the sea, and most of the people preferred the drawing-room and billiard-room. Standing did. But he tired of billiards after he had lost two games, and sauntered out to the terrace to get a breath of the wind so shunned by his fellow-guests. As he stood by the open French window of the smoke-room young Lancelot pushed by him into the room, and his pale face and troubled eyes startled Jack. He watched him cross the room to the inner door, and then stepped quietly out to the dark, windy terrace. Lise, he supposed, must be still somewhere out there—gloating, perhaps, over this poor young fool's wretchedness.

"Hard little devil!" said Jack once more, under his breath.

There seemed to be no sign of human life on the terrace—nothing but darkness and windy desolation. He strolled the full length to the farthest seat, and at the sight of something white huddled up in the corner hastened his steps a little. He was almost indignant with Lise at that moment. Even if it were none of his business, on young Lancelot's account he could feel that it had been cruel of his wife. With her charms and beauty—there was no doubt that she had grown into a very beautiful girl—with these weapons the young simpleton had no chance. He didn't like to remember Lancelot's face.

He sat down silently at the other end of the seat, and a pair of dark eyes watched him furtively from the bundle of white shawl at the other end. In five minutes Lise rose and moved away. As she passed him he put out his hand to stop her.

"Well?" she asked sullenly.

"Don't go in for a minute or two, Lise, unless you are cold."

"I'm not cold." She sat down again and waited, but he didn't speak. "I'd better go in," she said slowly. "You've come out to be quiet, I suppose? To rest? I'd better go in before I worry you."

Standing threw his cigarette away.

"I am afraid," said he slowly, "that for once I must do the worrying."

Lise turned sharply and stared at him. He could almost feel her gaze through the darkness.

"We decided," said he, "very sensibly, that you were to go your way, and I mine. But as your husband—and I am still your husband, unfortunately—I am bound to tell you that I don't like your way."

She said nothing, but her bright eyes watched him still more keenly.

"I met young Lancelot a minute ago coming away from you," said he, "with a look on his face—well, the kind of look I shouldn't care to see twice."

Still she said nothing.

"Heaven knows," he went on, "I don't want to interfere with your amusements, to remove your compensations; but with this boy——"

"What about this boy?" Her voice was harsh.

Standing chose another cigarette.

"Seems a pity, don't you think?"

"Why?"

He raised his eyebrows in the way she hated.

"Well, he's a nice, manly, fresh sort of mother's little boy, isn't he? He's the kind to find love's young dream rather a serious matter. Give it up, Lise. It isn't good enough. Let him keep his buttercup illusions a little longer."

"You are very kind to consider him so much."

"Good Lord, no!" He disclaimed the accusation with some alarm. "Kind! Don't think it. I'm not the sort of chap to go about being kind to people. You ought to know me better than that, Lise."

"I ought." Lise spoke bitterly. What a vixen she was! he thought.

"I don't suppose you'll take my advice in your affairs," he continued. "God knows why you should—why anyone should when I've managed my own so abominably; but I thought I'd just suggest to you that he's too good to be spoiled yet."

"Are you—jealous?" Her voice was cold, contemptuous.

"Good Lord, no!" His rejoinder was hearty. "Jealousy doesn't enter into a business arrangement, does it? And perhaps I've been a fool for my pains."

"Perhaps," said she quietly.

"Perhaps I'd better have let things drift. You'll go your own way whatever I say, of course, and as long as you don't worry me, or upset my mother, I oughtn't to mind. But it seemed a pity you should amuse yourself with playing a game which is such deadly earnest to *him*. If you had cared for him, of course, it would have been different, and——"

"Suppose I do care?" She asked the question in a strangled voice, and the moon coming suddenly out from the black clouds showed with full, clear light that Lise's eyes were brimming with tears, her cheeks tear-stained. She had been crying. Lise crying!

"By Jove!" he said, breaking off abruptly. "By Jove!"

"Suppose I do care?" said she again. "Suppose," she cried fiercely, "that this boy, this good, kind, honorable, manly boy, has taught me what I never knew before? Suppose he has taught me how to—to care? Suppose his true, unselfish love has shown me something wonderful and fine that my life might have had, and that it can never have now—oh, my God, that it can never, never, never have now!"

"By Jove!" Standing stared ahead

with unseeing eyes. "I never thought of that."

"Thought!" she cried. "No, you never *do* think, do you? You live your idle, selfish life, with only one idea to keep you alive—the idea of avoiding worry; of being left alone. If you had eyes——"

She stopped suddenly and hid her face in her hands.

Standing sighed.

"I wish you didn't work yourself into such a state," he said soothingly, at last. "If you'd only just reason things out and deal with them in a rational manner instead of flying into these exhausting——"

"Oh," cried Lise, leaning forward, with her hands clasping and unclasping on her knee in fierce agitation, "how you talk! How can one be reasonable or rational when one is eaten up with disappointment and despair and exasperation and——?"

"Can't think how it is I always rub you up the wrong way," her husband murmured in a puzzled voice. "I'm not much good, I know, but I am a peaceful sort of chap."

"Peaceful!" cried his wife. "You're dead, asleep! You're an oyster! You never *feel* anything. Why should you live at all? You might as well be dead. You only live to——"

"To stand in the way," said Standing thoughtfully. "Yes, I see. It has all, of course, been a huge mistake."

He was silent after that for a long time, and so was the girl, though she watched him with fierce, intent eyes.

"Are you—fond of this boy, Lise?" He asked the question in a tone of gentle interest, and I cannot wonder that it exasperated her.

"And if I am?" said she sullenly.

"You really love each other?"

"If we do?" said Lise in the same tone.

"Has he been—making a scene to-night?"

Lise leaned away in the further corner of the seat, her elbow on its iron arm, her chin on her hand.

"He told me tonight that he loved me," said she quietly.

"I guessed as much." He stroked his chin thoughtfully.

"Aren't you angry?" Her voice was hard, unreal.

Standing laughed rather sadly.

"Angry?" he repeated. "My poor Lise! No, I'm not angry. It's a beautiful world, beautifully arranged. I should like you to tell me more—if you can. If you could bring yourself to look upon me as a purely disinterested friend——"

"Oh!" said Lise, and her voice startled him. "I'll tell you," she said quickly. "There wasn't much to tell. He said that he loved me; that he knew I could never bring myself to care for such as he. Such as he, Jack! And then he cried. I have never seen a man cry before, and I don't think I want to see one again."

He made no comment, and she went on:

"You may be surprised to hear that I behaved in a perfectly blameless manner. I told him, as your mother would have expected me to tell him, that I was *your* wife—that I could not listen to him, that he must go away and never come near me again, that I had had no idea he would so take advantage of the friendly interest I had shown in him, that——"

"Lise!"

"Yes," said she doggedly, "I suppose *you* think I encouraged him. And if I did? If I let myself be happy for a few weeks, in a strange and beautiful dream, don't *you* dare to blame me."

"God knows I have no right to blame you," said he. "And you love him, Lise?"

"If I do?" said she bitterly. "If I do love him, I have sent him away. I have behaved as your mother would have had me behave. He has gone away. He said he should kill himself. But I am not afraid of that. He isn't a coward."

"No." Her husband spoke gravely. "He is not a coward, as you say——"

Lise gathered her skirts in her hands and swept away down the terrace to the open window of the drawing-room

This time he did not try to stop her. He had certainly food for thought as he sat there alone. He sat there a long, long time that night thinking deeply. He had spoken the truth when he had said that he'd never thought of Lise falling in love with this boy. He had miscalculated the hardness of her heart, it seemed. And how natural it was that they should love each other, this girl of twenty, this boy of twenty-three. How simple and likely a thing to have happened, it seemed to him now! And how happy poor, discontented, unhappy Lise might have been if only—if only she hadn't married him. Was that what he was thinking? No, it was too late for regret, and regrets were weak.

"The past is dead," he quoted sadly; "the future what we make it." And Lise could and would be happy if—ah, that was it, that was it. If *he* were only out of her way. . . .

"Why not?" said Jack, with a laugh; "why not? How many times have I been on the verge of putting an end to the whole rotten show before? What's the good of going on, anyhow? Before, I was nothing but a nuisance to myself. And now—poor little Lise! Poor little Lise! If I were the sort of man to admit a clear call of duty, I should certainly hear one now. And I've made such a beastly mess of everything I've been in for up to now, that I ought to welcome the chance of going out with a successful flare up. The only thing such a good-for-nothing obstacle can do is to vanish gracefully. I'll think it over."

It was all beautifully arranged. He would swim out as usual before breakfast, as far as possible, and the little bottle of chloroform tucked into his bathing-suit would do the rest. He would go out at seven, and it would all be beautifully and simply put down to cramp, when the tide washed him in.

It was the first time for years that Jack had felt really pleased with himself. He loved the sea as much as

he loved anything, and the whole idea pleased him. And getting up at seven next morning his enthusiasm was as fresh and warm on the subject as ever. It was certainly a masterly idea.

He opened Lise's door softly before he went down, and looked at her. She was lying curled up, with her heavy hair almost hiding her face. Her left hand with the wedding-ring on it lay small and white on the green satin eiderdown quilt. If he had loved his wife, he would have kissed that little outflung hand for the last time, but of course he did not love her. However, he no longer called her "a hard little devil." He was only sorry for her now. It was a glorious morning, and the shore was deserted. He was feeling pretty fit, too, and still exalted with that pleasant glow of conscious well-doing. If it were to be his last swim he would make the most of it. I don't know how far he swam out, but he was beginning to feel the first warnings of exhaustion when he took out the little bottle and drew the cork.

Why did they worry so? Why did they work his arm in that absurd way? And what did they mean by forcing brandy between his lips? Jove! how cold it was. . . .

"He's all right," someone said. "He'll do now. But the other poor devil——"

"What other?" he asked faintly. What other could there be?

"The man who saved you."

It took Jack some time to remember anything at all, and when he did, "Saved me?" he asked.

"Yes. We'd come out for a bit of mackerel fishing, and we found you two in the water. This chap was pretty far gone, I can tell you. I don't know how long he'd been keeping you up, but as soon as we got you into the boat he collapsed and went under. I had to go down after him. We've been trying artificial respiration for nearly three hours. *You're* all right now, aren't you? But he's— Poor chap!"

Jack raised himself to his elbow on

the sand, and looked at the quiet figure beside him.

"Lancel!" he said. "Young Lancelot?"

"Yes." The stranger looked compassionately at the poor boy. "Yes, it's Lancelot. Carew here knows him. He knows you, too, by sight. We've wired to the hotel. I'll wire again now, with the better news. We brought you here, you see, because it was a bit nearer than Marybeach. How did you come to be so far out without a boat?"

Jack struggled up—took a pull at the flask offered to him, but made no answer. He lifted Lance's heavy arms, and weakly tried to force them above his head.

"I should leave the poor devil alone," said his rescuer quietly. "You see, we've been at it three hours now, and, well—look at him."

And then Jack thought of Lise for the first time.

"Could I get a trap, or something?" he said curtly. "There's my wife, you see. The telegram—"

"Oh, she'll get this second wire almost as soon as the first," the stranger said cheerfully. "And we didn't mention any names in the first."

"I think I'll get back as soon as I can," Jack said quietly, "if you can lend me some clothes. It's the least I can do."

The other man stared. Standing was a long time coming to himself, he thought. But he said no more. It was two o'clock before Jack opened the door of his wife's room. And the stillness of it frightened him as he came in. A telegram lay open on the table; Lise was lying on the floor absolutely still. Her heavy hair had fallen from its neat coils and lay across her white dress in one great strand.

"Lise!" he spoke harshly; "Lise!"

With a long sigh she raised herself to her elbow, then to her knees, and crouched back looking at him with a strained, a ghastly face.

"Oh, for heaven's sake don't look like that!" he cried irritably. "Pull yourself together, Lise."

"You!" she whispered. "You!"

He dropped into the arm-chair by the window, and covered his eyes with his hand, and shuddered.

"I've spoiled everything I've touched ever since I was born," he said, "but this is the worst of all—the very worst of all. That boy!"

She sat, still crouching, watching his face with wide, dark eyes.

"I went out for—for my usual dip," said he slowly, "and swam too far. Then I got cramp, I suppose, and went under. That poor chap, young Lancelot, must have followed me, and kept me up till the confounded boat took me in. And they managed to lug *me* back to this delightful world, while poor young Lance—"

He stopped, nearly choked.

"He is dead?"

She spoke in dull, level tones. Her husband nodded. She rose, fighting, he could see, for self-control.

"I am sorry," he said in a low, miserable voice, "but it has all been a hideous mistake, Lise. It's the way of this beautiful world, you see, for the wrong man to be—saved."

Lise turned her head away, and stood there in the middle of the room, clenching her hands nervously.

"The telegram," she said in a hoarse whisper, "the telegram lied."

He stared at her, then reached out his hand and picked up the oblong pink slip.

Lancelot recovered consciousness; poor Standing dead. EDWARDS.

Jack looked from the form to his wife with puzzled eyes. What a silly mistake Edwards had made! Lise had thought, then, that he was the one who was dead. Then why had he found her lying in such a terrible abandonment of grief? But it was no doubt hysteria. She always did make a scene, if she could, he thought impatiently.

But the girl's nerves gave way at last. She came swiftly across the room and dropped on the floor at his side.

"Jack, oh, Jack!" She laid her hands on his knee and hid her face on

them. "For God's sake be kind to me now!"

"Lise!"

Her control once gone, she abandoned herself utterly.

"I can't bear it!" she said. "I can't bear it! We must separate, Jack. I shall die if we go on like this. It was all a lie about poor Lance. I wanted to rouse you, to make you *feel* something, if it was only anger. I wanted to make you feel something, if it was only jealousy. And it was all no good. Nothing's any good. I can't pretend any longer. We can't go on living together any more because—because you don't care—and *I* care too much."

"Lise!"

His amazed voice made her white cheeks flame.

"I'm not really bad-tempered," she cried, "but *you* made me furious, because I knew I was pretty and you wouldn't see it. I knew I was lovable, and yet you wouldn't love me. You say you are a failure, Jack—you can see now that you haven't failed in one

thing. You can see now that you have succeeded much too well with me. You—you made me love you better than anything in the whole world."

"Lise!"

With a tumult of new emotions in his heart, he tried to raise her head from her hands. Some strange, impossible feeling, half-awakened perhaps on the terrace the night before, made him lean forward and touch her disordered hair softly. She raised her eyes with half-frightened wonder to her husband's face. There was some hidden magic, perhaps, in that soft touch on her dark hair. Poor young Lancelot was forgotten.

Jack took the girl's miserable little face between his hands, and for the first time for more than a year, he kissed his wife. If Lise loved him—even if he were as indifferent as he had supposed himself to be—

Indifferent! He laughed softly.

"We'll have a fresh deal," he said, half-sadly. "And—we'll pray for better cards, Lise."



R O N D E L

By Theodosia Garrison

CLOSED the door between our hearts
 Ever—evermore
 Never at a touch it starts
 Open as before.

Shut within the grief that smarts
 And the longing sore;
 Closed the door between our hearts
 Ever—evermore.

New Love pleadeth and departs
 From the thrice-barred door.
 What availeth prayer or arts,
 Since that pride you bore
 Closed the door between our hearts
 Ever—evermore.

THE MESSENGER

By Elsa Barker

O PALE pressed flower
That has crossed the world-wide sea
From my Orient-wandering Love
With words for me!—

Frail messenger
Of a passion that will not die,
Though all the threads of life
Be snarled thereby!—

Your Asian stem
Absorbed from that storied earth
The essences that gave
The pale Christ birth

Beauty and faith
And a something all unknown,
On your sweet and subtle breath
To me are blown.

Give you, he says,
Soft kisses and send you back
To his tent, where the world's way joins
The pilgrim's track.

O flower, tell him
These messages for me:
Tell him there lies the old haze
Over the sea.

Tell him the path
To the little house and the lawn
Is overgrown with grass
Now he is gone.

Tell him the vine
On the arbor is bare of leaves;
Now it has nothing to hide
It pines and grieves.

Tell him the star
That recorded our bridal vow
In the book of the Summer dark
Is shining now.

Tell him the crows
In the pine-tree still arise
To challenge the wraith of dawn
With warning cries.

Tell him the glass
That used to mirror the sea
And our twinèd forms, now mirrors
Only the sea.

Give him these tears,
And tell him the golden heart
Of the rose of life grows gray
When lovers part.



HIS FATE

By Tom P. Morgan

"NOW, my—er—h'm!—dear young friends," majestically began the Hon. Thomas Rott, who had invaded the village school and had been invited by their loving teacher to address a few well-chosen words to the pupils, "the boy who bounds out of bed at the first call in the morning, who whistles as he dons his garments, and doesn't forget to wash his face and hands; who comes dancing to his breakfast with a merry smile for everybody; who does his tasks without growling; to whom duty is a pleasure; who never grumbles or complains, who—but, ah, who among this throng of bright-faced lads and lassies can tell me what that boy will be when he grows up?"

"I kin!" pessimistically replied a boy whose mother was a Grand Commanderess of a Concatenated Order of Something-or-other. "He'll be a hen-pecked husband. Them's the same symptoms that my pa says he had when he was young."



DIDN'T HOLD HIM RESPONSIBLE

WIFE—Our pastor doesn't practice what he preaches.

HUSBAND—No. Still, I should be slow to criticize him.

"I don't see why."

"I'm thoroughly convinced that he doesn't write his own sermons."

SALVAGE

By Ward Clark

STRAIGHT past the gold-braided guardian of the entrance, pausing a moment with dignity to receive his programme, then turning down the corridor to the left and pushing in a swinging-door, Fritz Mann made his way with an air that, he flattered himself, befitted a familiar frequenter of the place; yet it was his first visit to the Opera House, and before him lay the reality of his dream—his first music-drama. Every step of that progress from the pavement to his orchestra chair had been rehearsed. Each scrap of knowledge he had gleaned, from infrequent visits to the "opera-house" in Dubuque, from minute descriptions of the great temples of music at the hands of more fortunate music-mad associates, from a *lus rum's* perusal of the journal of music that had been his literary fare—each scrap was brought to bear to the perfecting of this triumphal entry. For this first hearing of the work he had worshiped like a veiled goddess was to be the apex of his life. It was not his tragedy, it was a kind of dull, ghastly farce that he, Fritz Mann, student and teacher of music, melomaniac, mad, mystical dreamer of harmonies, had come to twenty-eight without once having heard "Tristan und Isolde." All the music-maker in him—the creature of years of ill-tutored study, of generations of music-loving German ancestry—turned sick at the thought of the starvation he had undergone. But something had always checked the last step of hopeless resignation, and Fritz Mann had struggled on, more from habit than from conscious determina-

tion that the goal would some day be reached.

Now that it had come—the long, carefully prepared trip to New York, the opportunity to which the whole of his life now seemed to have pointed—no care was to be spared to wring the last drop of rich significance from the occasion so long deferred. Weeks of the drudgery of teaching, anxious hours of thought had been squandered to perfect the mere accessories of dress and deportment, that nothing should be lacking to the high perfection of the ultimate moment. The months of preparation had taken on the guise of a devotee's novitiate. Night after night he had sat at his piano, the score of "Tristan" before him, alternately playing and reading, calling his untrained imagination to the aid of his poor experience as he traced and retraced the musical idea in the impoverished medium of a piano score. The intensity of his purpose did for him what a more facile and enlightened study might have failed to do; Fritz Mann knew this piano score "by heart," as the phrase is; more than that, he knew it by hand, by head, by the very blood of him. When that great time was at hand, he must be ready in every smallest detail that lay with him to perfect.

Such intensity of preparation had raised him to a plane whence he could look down on the topography of his soul's voyage of discovery with a strange sense of familiarity. All this was as he had pictured it. The burst of lights, the row on row of the boxes,

the merged contrasts of colors, greeted him as old friends of his solitary imaginings. The first notes of the *Vorspiel*, when they sounded, were not more familiar, though he had heard the *Vorspiel* and the sobbing, soaring passion of the *Liebestod* once when the Chicago orchestra had visited Dubuque. But the mounting waves of tone, the curve and flux of the music, steadied his nerves while they sharpened his senses. The sonorous uprush of the climax bore him aloft with a majestic sweep that left him cool, tinglingly sensitive, alert for every sensation.

But the rise of the curtain chilled his longings. In his perfect vision of the scene he had had before him, a ship, a group of sailors, a narrow pavilion pitched like a tent between high bulwarks. Here, in spite of the background of sail and shrouds and the glimpse of blue water beyond, the great open stage was as unlike a ship as possible. The voice of the sailor at the masthead helped him to place the scene in its proper adjustment, but the struggle of his baffled imagination seeking its realization momentarily disconcerted him. He had lost precious seconds of sensation.

Then suddenly there was a movement on the stage. A figure reclining on a couch stirred, a voice enfolded his senses. He felt himself carried out, far out in the hollow curve of a long wave of desire, powerless to resist its seduction, powerless to wish to resist. This, then, was his Isolde! The real woman before his eyes and the no less real woman of his brain were merged; the dreamer awakened into the scene of his dream. Fritz Mann, his eyes and ears drinking in the form and the voice of the woman before him, was strangely alert to the duality of his sensation. The creature to whom his heart went out in one wave of longing was the Irish princess of legend; she was no less, to his sharpened consciousness, Freda Stang, the artist, the interpreter of Wagner's heroine whose performances had effaced the memory of all but the greatest.

The artist in him heard a great singer, a supreme actress, laying bare the soul of the most heroic of tragic rôles. Not once did the illusion escape him. His grip fastened not on the actual princess, but on the presentment. Painfully sensitive as he had held himself to the sway of the music and the drama, the personality of the actress insinuated itself into his thoughts. It was a woman who called to him, and though the call was in a foreign tongue he heard it and understood, for he had bathed his fingers in the dragon's blood.

Through the long duologue of Isolde and her serving-maid, out of which Freda Stang flashed new messages of tragic import, he projected himself into the drama in the part of the absent lover. The apparition of Tristan was something of a shock. He had half looked to see himself stride gravely into the Presence—not the actual Fritz Mann, short, sallow, nervous, ascetically lean of jaw and broad of forehead, but a glorified, conquering enlargement of himself. The tenor was Hans Kaiser—a blond giant with the frame of a Hercules and a Saxon accent.

But the shock was only momentary. The tenor's entrance was impressive, his voice noble. Into his huge mould Fritz poured himself, living every note of the music, every *nuance* of the struggle of wills. The moments were eating up the years of his life. When the cup touched the tenor's lips a shudder passed through his body. *Now* he too would live; now he knew love. Tristan's agonizing cry, the hopeless ecstasy of the falling inflection, "Isolde!" echoed in his soul. He was quite mad, for he loved—not Isolde, but Freda Stang.

The rest of the act went out in a great blur. All he saw was the woman, a white flame against black. The applause, the bravas were the signal for a hurried exit. As he passed through the swinging-door he looked instinctively toward the right—that way must lie the stage and its entrance. A man in uniform stood at the end of the corridor. Fritz went straight up

to him, guided by a new sense that had taken possession of him.

"I must see Fräulein Stang at once," he said.

The man looked him over coolly, dispassionately. "What for?" he demanded.

"I—it's of the greatest importance," he insisted. He fumbled in his pocket for a card. As he withdrew his hand a bill came with the pasteboard. Unhesitatingly, with a gesture of authority, he placed both in the attendant's hand.

"Please get this to her at once," he said.

"All right," was the answer. "Just wait here and I'll see."

He was gone ten minutes. Fritz leaned against the wall and waited, motionless. Then the man returned.

"She says you can come to her room after the second act," he said.

II

FREDA STANG was in her dressing-room. The exaltation that had carried her through the second act—"the best second act I've ever done," she told herself—had faded and left her cold. The parade before the foot-lights had seemed endless; she estimated whimsically the number of miles she must have walked to be so tired. Yet she could not lose the sense that complete relaxation would be fatal; she must crown the superb expression of that first act, the supreme lyricism of the second, with a *Liebestod* that should scale heaven. For that final effort she must keep her nerves shivering, her spirit eager. She had once told Mottl that for her the hardest part of "Tristan" was the first half of the third act.

But mingled with the restlessness aroused by the anticipation of the long wait was a contentment, the feeling of a goal almost achieved, and an excited, nervous curiosity. Tonight she had sung for one man, and she knew already, with a woman's certainty, that she had pleased him. Thanks to her friendship with Curtis Beck, a

critic who knew, "from the inside," the movements of half musical Europe, she had learned of the distinguished auditor she was to have. After the first act she had reflected with some amusement on the indifference of Brangaene—there was a big concert at Carnegie Hall, and none of the critics would be in until late. Freda wasted no love on the stout American mezzo. She knew that the dearest wish of that lady was to be selected for certain important rôles at the Freies Theatre in Nuremberg—the new opera-house, said to enjoy the financial patronage of Baron Zehnfeld, the richest man in Bavaria, which was to reincarnate the ancient glories of the Master-singers and eclipse at one stroke Bayreuth and the Prinz-Regent Theatre.

The stout American's ambition was shared, for that matter, by every opera singer in New York and Germany. It was said that the artistic direction was to be the most complete and brilliant ever attempted. But singers in Berlin, Vienna, Munich, Dresden, New York—everywhere, were discussing the extraordinary hardihood of Baron Zehnfeld in entrusting the absolute direction to a young conductor of Stuttgart, who had sprung into fame suddenly as the result of a series of Wagner performances. Yet, as against the natural skepticism of his rivals, it was argued by those who knew the baron that he was himself something more than a clever amateur of music and the stage, and that he was at the same time too shrewd a financier to entrust to incapable hands an enterprise on the success of which his heart was set.

Unquestionably the young conductor had become a subject of interest in his own world. Even Fritz Mann, in Dubuque, had read of him in the journal of music to which he subscribed. He had at once found a special interest in the fact that the conductor's name and his own were the same. He speculated on the possibility of a relationship—his own family had come from Wurtemberg. But Germany and Nuremberg were too far away to furnish a subject of burning interest.

He would have been more interested had he known that Fritz Mann, the conductor of ten days' fame, had slipped quietly, incognito, over to America to hear the singers of the Opera House. His interest in this information could, however, scarcely have equaled that of the singers themselves, had they possessed it. But the secret had been well kept; Freda Stang was confident that only she and one other knew it.

For her, too, the Nuremberg engagement seemed an imperative achievement. It would give the final touch of assurance to her career. It was common talk among the singers that her only rival would be a woman twenty years her senior, though still near the height of her powers. When Freda knew that the Nuremberg director was in New York she had prepared herself for this night's "Tristan und Isolde," with the grave assurance that it was epochal. If she sang well tonight, it would mean her engagement for Nuremberg; it would mean her acceptance by Germany as the greatest of Isolde; it would mean—oh, the settled course of her career, the realization of her ambition—and the confounding of Radwitz, the New York director, who counted complacently on retaining her services at his own terms.

And then, as she had come from the stage after the first act, trembling, half hysterical, half mad with the nervous tension, she had found the attendant waiting for her with the card that meant so much.

"This gentleman wants to see you, madam."

Fritz Mann! Then the director of the Freies Theatre *had* been in the audience; then her anxious preparation had not been useless. He had heard her first act, and he had approved. The contest was over; it remained only to sign the terms of her peace. With a light heart she had sent the man back with her answer, and the confidence the event had given her had carried her triumphantly through the second act. Now she awaited him, outwardly

calm in spite of the flutter of anticipation and curiosity.

The door was opened by her maid at a knock. She saw before her a man, dark, pale, with two spots of bright red marking the prominent cheekbones, and black eyes that burned with a dull fire under a broad brow. She fancied she read this man's nature in his steady gaze and unquiet, nervous hands. The eyes, especially, she thought swiftly, might well be the eyes of a genius—or a madman. The intense directness of his look was disconcerting.

He advanced straight to her. "Fräulein," he said—he spoke in German—"you have given me the highest happiness life holds, and you crown it by letting me tell you of it. I come to thank you."

She looked at him in some surprise; the praise would have been fulsome had it sounded less sincere.

"You are very kind, Herr Direktor," she began, "but I——"

"Why do you call me 'Herr Direktor'?" he broke in on her. "I am not a director—I am not a musician—I am nothing."

"Ah," she smiled back at him, "then I accept the praise as I like best to—from the man."

"Thank you," he returned simply. "Yes, I, too, like that best."

His eyes had not left hers, and he stood before her until the silence began to embarrass her. She was about to invite him to be seated, but he anticipated her.

"That is all, Fräulein Stang." He brought the words out slowly. "I came to New York to hear you. I have heard you, and you have let me thank you. Now it is for me to go. I shall not forget you."

"No, no," she begged him; that the interview should be so brief was not in her book. "I have nearly an hour's wait before I go on again. You must help me through a few minutes of it at least. Tell me what you liked in my singing."

Fritz seated himself in the chair she pushed toward him, while his eyes still held hers. Freda wondered what

it all meant. His manner was almost embarrassing—strangely intimate in spite of its formality. An absurd idea flashed into her mind, which she tried to dismiss. Could the man be making love to her on this short notice? After all, that would have been a comprehensible enough situation, and one that she felt herself able to cope with—she had “handled” a dozen amorous directors. But his voice sounded too sincere, he was too obviously, sadly in earnest. And it would be presumptuous to imagine that he was already seriously under the spell of a woman he had barely spoken to. Whatever he meant, she was interested. His appeal to her had been as straight as the look from his deep eyes.

He faced her question as if the duty of answering weighed on him. “What can I say about your singing? It was not your singing—it was everything. You were my Isolde—the woman I have dreamed. I have never heard it before,” he ended simply.

“Oh, you praise me too much, Herr—Herr Mann.” Freda was more and more puzzled to make her guest out. “You must have heard many great Isoldes.”

“I have never before heard it,” said Fritz Mann, “I shall never hear it again—and I love you, Fräulein.”

The word came quietly, simply from his lips; but it clarified for Freda Stang the turbid pool in which her thoughts had been moving. She had missed it all before because it had been too simple. It was real; it was genuine; it was true. How it had come about, and why, were questions that suddenly became of no importance. This man loved her as the heroes of her art loved the women of her creation; inevitably, in a moment, overpoweringly.

Of herself Freda knew only that her feeling toward him was unlike anything in her life to which she might refer it for comparison. Dozens of men had professed to love her, and she had known both gratification and disgust at the experience. Once she had for a time fancied herself in love, and then, when the disillusion came, had deter-

mined that she would never again be so easily taken in. But this was something different. This man, with his calm declaration that asked nothing and yet inexorably demanded everything, was as different from the man she had fancied she loved as from those she had known she abhorred.

She started to address him, and then stopped to cut the last ties that tethered her to conventionality. The philtre had touched her lips. Absurd, impossible, romantic, foolish and mistaken she might be—she would meet and know this man on the plane whereon he had challenged her. In the emotional delirium the stage had but just now bred in her, it seemed almost the simple, natural thing to do.

“Listen to me,” she said, and laid her hand gently on his. “It is absurd and wholly wrong for you to say that. But I believe you and take you at your word. Of course you are mistaken in me. How it came about I cannot dream. Artist that you are, perhaps you have never known women, and this was to be your time to learn. Then let me tell you that I am sure I do not love you. I don’t believe I could love Tristan himself, though he came to me as you have tonight. I am a selfish woman, and all that counts greatly for me is what goes on night after night on that stage. That is what I live for. Do you understand?”

His hand trembled a little under hers. “Yes,” he replied. “I’ve always understood that. It seems to me I’ve always known just how you would feel when I came to know you. You didn’t think, did you, that I expected you to love me? That would be insanity—and I’m not insane. I only love you.”

Her smile at this was wonderfully soft and wistful. “Then you must let me be honest with you,” she went on, “as I have never before been with anyone. I don’t love you, you see—I can’t; but I shall always think of you as I have never thought of anyone else—as I shall never think of anyone else. Your place in my heart, my dear, strange lover, shall be your own.

And some time—it will be soon, won't it?—we'll meet again, perhaps in broad daylight, and Tristan and Isolde will be far away, and I shall be only Freda Stang and you will be Fritz Mann, and we'll be quite like other people. But we'll both know that once we were not like other people. And I shall say to myself: 'This is the man who told me he loved me!' And you will say to yourself: 'This is the woman who knows I love her.' But we will tell no one. We'll meet like other people, and no one shall guess this moment."

Fritz Mann put his hand to his head. Her words seemed to loose the cord that had held his thoughts together. His eyes began to wander, and he seemed to recall them to her only with an effort.

"No—no one shall—ever—know," he said haltingly.

"And now"—Freda put her hand gently on his arm—"you must leave me. Go back to your seat and the music. The curtain is up. And think that all those people out there are not there at all, for I shall sing the *Liebested* for you alone. Yes, I shall sing it all for you. Good-bye."

He got to his feet rather uncertainly. "Good-bye," he said, and turned to go. At the door he faced her again, looking into her eyes. "Ah, my love—the *Liebested*!" he cried, and was gone.

He made his way back to his place among the audience. There he sat bowed forward, his head in his hands. Only twice before the end did he stir from that position. At her entrance and cry, "Tristan!" he raised his head for a moment. But as Isolde raised herself from the body of her dead lover and sang:

"Mild und leise
wie er lächelt,
wie das Auge
hold er öffnet,"

his head went back and his eyes fastened themselves on her with the unfaltering gaze they had had in her room. So he sat until the curtain fell.

Then he made his way out of the Opera House and straight to his hotel,

which was near at hand. At the desk he inquired the time of the first train for the West, and was told that one left within the hour. Hastily gathering his belongings together, he rushed from the hotel, called a cab—it was the first time he had ever ridden in one—reached the station and boarded a train.

III

To the theorizing observer who seeks the personal note in the environment an individual has made for himself Freda Stang's apartments would have presented something of a puzzle. In spite of the luxurious furnishings of a smart New York hotel, the rooms in which the singer lived for a third of the year reflected an idiosyncratic, if complex spectrum. Yet the mere presence of a grand piano with a few scores lying on its bare surface could scarcely be said to argue the musician; an actress or great lady might display as many signs of the lyric cult.

Perhaps the evidences of her avocations and recreations were more significant; they were at least numerous. A search of the rooms would have revealed works of fiction in at least four languages; volumes of short stories by Henrik Pontoppidan and Holger Drachmann—Freda Stang was of Danish birth—Margarete Boehme's "Tagebuch Einer Verlorener," a ten-year-old volume by Anatole France and one scarcely ten days old by George Moore. There was almost no poetry and few specimens of the dramatic art. It was one of her sayings that reading a play was about as satisfying as playing the Funeral March from "Götterdämmerung" on a piano. But there were evidences of multifarious outdoor occupations—riding-crops, heavy boots for walking, even a fishing-rod that told of the yearly vacation in the Adirondack woods.

The truth is that Freda Stang's ideals were as remarkable for versatility as was her practice for concentration. Undoubtedly she had asked

too much of life: that every tree in the garden should yield her its perfect fruit. Inevitable disappointment in a world something less than perfect had thrown her back on the one ambition that seemed comparatively easy of achievement—and, by the same measure, little worth satisfying. Hence she passed for supremely selfish, wholly centred in her "career," which was actually her chief pursuit only because it seemed to her insignificant and attainable. But habit had done for her what her will could never have accomplished. Success on the stage had come to mean nearly all that she had pretended to find in it.

In a moment of honest self-analysis she was confessing to herself that her words to Fritz Mann the night before last were a closer shot at the truth than she had quite realized. "A selfish woman," she had called herself, "and all that counts greatly for me is what goes on night after night on the stage." Was it true? Had the woman in her been swallowed up in the artist? What a sorry, ironic platitude of life if toleration and then devotion could grow out of disgust! She had always believed she despised the stage; now she knew—she faltered before she brought the idea sharply to formulation—it was her life. The mimic passions of the stage were her only passions; the cloud-flames that enfolded Brünnhilde's couch were her reality.

No! One contact with actual life held her back from this dismal ending; some vestiges of womanhood had escaped the devouring element of her art; she could still inspire a simple, natural, elemental love. Life was not yet quite hopeless. Freda Stang read men shrewdly. The man who had come to her dressing-room had bared his soul to her. She knew what his love was—as complete and absorbing as it was simple and direct; neither the facile desire of the male creature nor the passionate admiration of a fellow-artist. It was not the artist he adored; he had known how to go back of the creature of the stage, straight to the human being that creature was destroying. Ah, then she

November, 1906—6

was still something other than a stage "property." If Fritz Mann had flashed the light that had shown her how dangerously near the rocks she had drifted, he had also dragged her back. Only one thing could be dearer to her than the certainty that he loved her: to have loved him, too, in her turn, with a love as big, as honest as his own. Without a thought she would have given her "career" to meet him thus. It was impossible, of course; that she so longed for it proved this to her clear vision of herself. But of the consoling knowledge of his adoration nothing could deprive her.

And now that the once coveted engagement was secure, she could smile to think how little it counted for itself. This was what her friends would never believe. Even Curtis Beck had chuckled at her exclamation when he had telephoned her that morning that his friend, Herr Direktor Mann, wished to be allowed to call on her that afternoon.

"Then you think the engagement's sure?" he had laughed. "Well, he's heard your Isolde and he wants to see you. Draw your own conclusions."

"Did he—did he say anything about—about my singing?" she stammered back.

His reply was prompt. "Oh, he's a deep one. I sounded him diplomatically, but he only looked wise and said he merely wanted to talk with you. I suspect he's hit. Then I'll bring him around at two?"

So now he was coming. She was to meet him again, but this time in the presence of another. That would be hard—but, the woman of the stage cried out, what a dramatic accent the scene would acquire! They would meet conventionally, decorously—oh, how decorously! The little drama would play itself out for them alone—the drama of their consciousness of how much life had held for them beyond this paltry give and take of complimentary phrases.

When the two men were announced she felt a momentary flutter that threatened to disturb the poise demand-

ed for the playing of this difficult, delicious comedy. But as they entered the room she felt herself grow suddenly calm. By a tense effort of will she kept her eyes from the face of the second man as she greeted Beck, who shook hands with her warmly before turning to his companion.

"And now at last, Fräulein," he laughed, "let me present the Herr Direktor Mann."

Freda turned to offer him her hand—and then her heart missed a full beat, while the blood ebbed from her face in a wave. It was not—it *could* not be—Fritz Mann; the man before her was tall and lean and fair-haired, ruddy and blue-eyed. It was a joke, this silly masquerade—but what a feeble, wretched joke!

Yet at this moment her education of the theatre stood her in good stead. She said not a word while he shook her hand interminably—she felt herself growing old, her hair turning gray, her face settling into hard lines, while he held her. She could not for her life have spoken in the first minute; the sound of his voice signaled to her alert brain that she must cover her confusion and say nothing for the present. That would be her "line" until she had untangled this horrible snarl.

It was the tone of his voice that mercifully gave her this warning; a nasal, self-confident, slightly cynical tone. "Awfully glad to meet you, Fräulein," he drawled. "Didn't mean to let you folks know yet that I was here. But it's getting so I can't go anywhere without having a lot of people after me for engagements. Can't even preserve my incognito, you see. As soon as I tell my friend Beck here, you wheedle the secret out of him, and there you are."

The wave of disgust that possessed Freda at this speech helped to restore her self-possession. Her back had been to the light. Beck may have thought her a shade too stiff and reserved, but he had surely noticed nothing more. She was smiling amiably now at the stranger, whom she hated savagely, without reason.

Unobservant of her silence, he strolled familiarly over to the piano and picked up a score. "So you're studying Salome, are you?" he remarked. "No use. We're fixed for that. Friedheim's going to sing it for us. But your Isolde is a very pretty bit of work. No reason why we can't do business on that, if you're reasonable. I wouldn't mind having you sing it at Nuremberg."

"Then you heard me the other night, Herr Direktor?" she asked steadily.

"Oh, yes. I was in the directors' box, you know. Good chap, Radwitz. He's treated me decently, though he knows I'll take his best singers away from him. I suppose he'll be sorry to lose you, eh?"

Freda choked with disgust for this man who, she felt, had cheated her miserably. Not for a moment did she dream that the trickery could be that of the one who had visited her in her dressing-room—the man, she realized at last, whom she might have loved. There was no fraud, no deception in his worship. And at the same time she knew that it was not a joke, to be explained presently with laughter; it was the sordid, ugly farce that we call tragedy. This was the real Herr Direktor Mann; the rest was forever inexplicable.

"You are very kind," she said rather coldly. "I'm glad you liked my Isolde."

"Yes, it wasn't bad," the Herr Direktor resumed carelessly, "though I must say I always make my artists begin the *Liebestod* more quietly. You haven't enough restraint, Fräulein; your climax came too soon. But then, you're young. You'll do it all right when I've coached you a bit."

"You are very kind," she repeated still more coldly, "but there is really no use in our discussing that matter. Radwitz has offered me a three years' contract, and I expect to sign it tomorrow."

"What!" cried Beck in blank amazement. "But Freda, you told me

nothing on earth would induce you to sign again with Radwitz. Are you crazy, child?"

"A little, perhaps," she smiled at him rather wanly. "At least, I've changed my mind. A woman may,

mayn't she, my dear Curtis? And Curtis, I've just been learning that I'm not altogether an artist—I'm a woman, too."

And after they had left her Freda Stang cried quietly to herself.



AT END

By Thomas S. Jones, Jr.

A H, how far we journeyed here—
 Vagrant farers once were we—
 Countries proud and waters drear
 Called us ever luringly.
 Now 'tis all a story told,
 We were young, who are so old.

Then our blood was red with fire,
 We knew well of Joy and Pain,
 How we sought our mad desire!
 How we wept when Love was slain!
 Now we wonder wistfully
 That the foolish Two were we.

We have come to Journey's End,
 Where the shadows always stay
 And the still winds scarcely bend
 The tall grasses through the day.
 Now all Joy and Sorrow cease,
 We have reached the Vale of Peace!



HIS CURIOSITY AROUSED

RANDOLPH—I have saved up over two thousand dollars during the last three years without pinching myself.

SYLVESTER—Good! Did you accomplish it without pinching the other fellow?

THE WORLD AND THE LOVER

By Richard Le Gallienne

THE whole world is proverbially said to love a lover. Like most proverbial statements, this one is exceedingly open to question. In fact, all the evidence seems flatly the other way. On what data, one wonders, did the old proverb-maker base his dictum? Surely not on the great love-stories. The world, with its appetite for vicarious excitement, likes well enough to watch the tragic spectacle of a great passion. Incapable of great feelings itself, it thrills to the drama of them in others. It even applauds their lawlessness, and canonizes their audacity. All the same, it will not raise a finger to help while the story is in the making; but, on the contrary, does everything in its power to persecute and impede. The moment Romeo and Juliet are safely dead in each other's arms, the world is voluble with its sympathy—but not till it is quite sure that its sympathy can be of no possible service to the lovers. While sympathy would be of some use, the world—which is the embodied cowardice and cant of humanity—stands firm with Montague and Capulet, seniors. If the lovers win, well and good. No one has ever denied that the world loves success—though it has always consistently done its worst to prevent it. Yes, the world loves successful love, as it fawns on anything that has conquered it. It loves also pity that costs it nothing. But that it loves a lover, for love of love, is simply not true. If it were true, there would probably have been no love-stories, for the drama of love has mostly come of the conflict between the lovers and the world.

84

They had to count the world well lost to win each other. It was so in the days of Tristan and Iseult, and so it still is in the days of Rudolph of Bavaria.

What the world, however, does thoroughly appreciate is the exhibition of love in difficulties—love in the ribald searchlight of the divorce court, love shipwrecked, love running the gantlet of persecution, love befooled and betrayed and despoiled of its dream. There is something well pleasing to the cynicism of the world in all this, for love in its very nature, in its contemptuous idealism, is a reproach, and therefore an offense, against the complacent materialism of the world; and, naturally, the world rejoices to see its lofty pretensions in the dust. For love has indeed a high-handed way with it, an aristocratic insolence of bearing toward the plebeianism of use-and-wont, and the world is ever on the watch to pay it out for its transcendental airs. As the course of true love never did run smooth, the world is assured of perennial entertainment. It would, indeed, seem to be in love's very nature to be always in difficulties; for, as Hafiz complains:

 this strange love which seemed
 at first, alas!
So simple and so innocent a thing,
How difficult, how difficult it is!

Poor love! It certainly has enough troubles of its own making to contend with, without the world besetting its path with external obstacles. It seems born to sorrow as the sparks fly upward. There is always something the matter, and the love that might be perfect seldom gets its chance.

Not only the world, but life itself seems to take a mysterious delight in making things as hard as possible for this gentle passion, that means so kindly and asks only to be left in peace. There would almost seem, for example, to be studied malignity of design, rather than mere accident, in the way life carefully arranges that lovers should always meet too late for happiness. With pure devilishness, Life would seem to say: Here are two people absolutely made for each other. They have but to meet at the right moment, under favoring conditions, to be completely and enduringly happy. Therefore, I will hide them from each other, till such time as they have become hopelessly involved in the lives of others entirely unsuited for them, and then, when they are irrevocably pledged to a disastrous destiny, I will bring about their meeting, and watch the agonized drama that results. This is the formula from which life seldom deviates, and it never seems to weary of the sardonic tragic-comedy of two lovers thus trying to disentangle themselves from the web of circumstance.

This syncopation, which prevails elsewhere and everywhere in the stories of lovers, seems the more designed because life, when it wishes, is seen to calculate its times and seasons with such precision, and bring about other meetings and matings with such inspired promptitude. Consider the exquisite punctuality of the heavenly bodies. The conjunctions of the planets are timed to the fraction of a second, and, after journeyings a century long, they come gliding in their appalling orbits straight to the sidereal rendezvous. And elsewhere in nature we see the same careful ordering of dependent correspondences. The bee is not abroad before the coming of the flowers, nor is the butterfly sent forth to meet the snow; neither is the tiniest nursling of the earth awakened into life, before nature has prepared for its appointed welcome. In all her other pairings nature is seen to be anxiously exact—only with man and woman, it

would seem, is she so mysteriously perverse.

And this bitter wrong which Life thus does to Love is one which even Life itself is powerless to right. Sometimes, with ironic kindness, Life will seem to offer Love a late opportunity of correcting that old mistake. Some years after their first hopeless meeting she will make the way apparently smooth for them; loose them, by change and chance, from those dividing bonds and say, "Now, take each other." But alas! it is too late. They are no longer the same people. The years have had their way with them. They are to each other but sacred memories, ghosts of Might-have-been.

No diver brings up love again.
Dropped once, my beautiful *Félice*,
In such cold seas

One perhaps hardly realizes the important part played in these heart-tragedies by—the moment, the moment that can never come again. We are apt to assume that, so long as the two chief actors remain alive, it is in their power, under favoring circumstances, to take up their lives together at the point where they parted. But so soon as they attempt to do this it is borne tragically in upon them that there was a third actor equally important with themselves present at the time of their first fateful meeting and choosing of each other, an actor impossible to recall or to substitute. That actor was—the moment. Or, to change the simile, the moment was like that perilously sensitive harmony of conditions which the old alchemists called the moment of projection, the moment when the elements in the crucible are tremulously eager to combine, when every influence has been adjusted with unerring calculation, when the planets are shining in that magical aspect for which the alchemist may watch in vain all the rest of his life, the tense moment before the diverse elements leap into union and turn to—gold.

So it was, almost exactly, with our two lovers. Had the moment been

allowed to have its way with them they would have become one indivisible happiness, growing more perfectly in harmony with the passage of time, subject to the same influences and undergoing the same changes so subtly together as to appear unchanged. But the moment of union gone by, left separate in the world, two divided entities individually subject to different influences—though their love, say, of year 1900 may remain alive, they find on meeting again in 1906 that that love is somehow not in harmony with their changed and developed selves. It needs, so to say, to be brought up-to-date, and they realize, with sad hearts, that that cannot be done. The two people who loved each other in 1900 have passed into dreamland. There they still love each other. But the two people who bear their names, and still look like them in 1906, are not the same, and can never be the same again. It is just possible that their up-to-date embodiments may fall in love on their own account, on a 1906 basis, but I doubt if this has ever happened. No "gone is gone——"

Look in my face; my name is Might-have-been;
I am also called No-more, Too-late, Farewell.

Though, as we have remarked, the world, so strangely said to love a lover, does everything in its power to make the course of true love run as rough as possible, it is the severest critic of any attempt on the part of love to make it smooth. Let two unhappy people attempt to remould the "sorry scheme" of their matrimonial purgatory "nearer to the heart's desire," and the world is at once after them with its censorious hypocrisy. It was, more than likely, the world's fault to start with, but that makes no difference. The situation, too, is probably one of delicate complexity, the rights and wrongs of it so equally divided and so inextricably tangled, and the whole dilemma so intimately personal to the two involved, that it is impossible for a third person to get at the evidence,

not to speak of passing judgment. The world, however, takes no account of such nice considerations, but, with ignorant impudence, presumes to decide and condemn. As the world is too coarsely organized to know anything about the finer manifestations of the mystery that is love, it is necessarily insensitive to any of its more refined difficulties. The divorce-court differences of those who love crudely it can understand, but the painful spiritual incompatibilities of finer natures are so much Greek to it. For the loves of butchers and book-makers it is a competent tribunal, but the love difficulties of more highly organized individuals are not to be solved by the meat-axe of the law.

The pity of it is that the very fineness of such natures increases their suffering and further complicates complexity. For simple violent natures there are remedies equally simple and violent. Love, maybe, has turned to hate, according to the ancient melodramatic formula, and there the issue is simple, and the trouble soon disposed of. But, with the finer natures, love's difficulties are seldom so clean-cut as that. Two who have once loved may be aware that their love is dead, yet so much old kindness survives that they shrink from hurting each other, will indeed suffer keenly in secret rather than betray the lonely truth. One does not envy the nature that can coldly say to another in whom love is still alive: "My love is dead"; and yet there will be many to argue that this executioner's way is best. To others it will seem too much like plain murder. Better surely to suffer the pains of hell in silence than thus to smite with clenched fist the appealing face of love. Even though, sooner or later, the truth must out, surely it is the better way to mitigate its revelation all we can. In this matter, however, woman is permitted to be more summary than man; and the reason is, perhaps, not far to seek. Consider the airy way in which a woman will break off an engagement, with little more concern than if she were dismissing a servant. But a man

must keep his, though he may have come to see with clear eyes that to do so means certain unhappiness on both sides.

Has it not happened to many a man to drift into an engagement with some charming girl, who, he is obscurely conscious, in spite of his genuine affection for her, is not somehow the wife he had been expecting some day to marry? He is dimly aware of a misgiving at the bottom of his heart that she is not the wife life has chosen for him. Life whispers him to "wait," giving him one of those warnings which at important moments Life often does give us through our instincts, but which too often we allow our reason to overrule. "Wait," Life keeps saying, "your woman of destiny is already on her way toward you. At any moment she may turn the corner of the street, and you may meet her face to face. Wait, oh, wait!" But he pays no heed to the warning, and, suddenly, when he is inexorably pledged, perhaps but a short week before his marriage day—the dream-woman turns the corner of the street! And it is too late.

Had the cases been reversed his betrothed, without a moment's hesitation, would have dismissed him into outer darkness with half-a-sheet of notepaper, and left him to get over it as best he could. But he, being a man, must act a man's part, and, unknown to her, lay as a sacrifice upon the altar of their wedding the whole joy and meaning of his life. Or, if he conceives it his duty to tell her of his changed feeling, she will probably break down so piteously, with hints at suicide, that he feels himself an utter scoundrel; tenderness wells up in him, perilously like love, and the marriage takes place, after all.

It may happen that such a marriage proves successful, but the probability is that, human nature, even with the best intentions, remaining human nature, it will sooner or later come to grief. In spite of faithful efforts to lay it, the ghost of that old dream will haunt the heart of the man, and will some day glide, visible to both, between

the unhappy husband and wife. Nor will the apparition long remain invisible to the sharp eyes of the world.

Then shall the man hear how thankful a thing it is that he has tried to do. If in extenuation of his failure to make happy the woman he did not love, it be urged that he has sacrificed the woman he did love and his own heart in the unsuccessful attempt, he will learn that he did a cruel wrong to his wife to marry her under such circumstances, that the manly thing for him to have done was to have broken his engagement! Probably someone will quote:

For each man kills the thing he loves,
By each let this be heard,
Some do it with a bitter jest,
Some with a flattering word;
The coward does it with a kiss,
The brave man with a sword.

Yet, had he used the sword, who needs be told what would have been said of him then? He was placed in one of the cruelest dilemmas which a man can be called to face. Sacrificing his own joy, he has honestly done his best. But the world, which is incapable even of conceiving the sacrifice he made, regards only his failure in a noble struggle, and condemns him accordingly.

Love's tragedies are usually three-cornered, and no less often it is the woman, who, by the force of those circumstances which press so peculiarly hard on women, has drifted into a loveless marriage, to meet too late "the love which moves the sun and stars." No one needs be told how much sympathy she may expect from the world in her cruel situation; for the world, that likes nothing so well as to oppress the weak and to kill its wounded, is strangely pitiless to an unhappy woman who would fain be happy. For a woman that remoulding nearer to the heart's desire is a desperate step indeed.

There is one important truth about love which love's critics never seem to take into account—the fact that love is an irresistible natural force, and that falling in love is not a matter of the

volition. The coming of a great love is as unforeseen and as unescapable as the day of one's death. The world treats falling in love as though it were a wilful self-indulgence, whereas the victims of that "lord of terrible aspect" know too well how helpless they are in the throes of a passion that fell upon them with supernatural suddenness, like lightning out of a clear sky.

There is always a strange terror mingled with the joy of love's coming, and those who know love best, rather than seek it, would often, like the hero of Tennyson's "Maud," flee from its cruel madness. For love seldom comes without bringing sorrow to someone: "Alas!" as an old dramatist says, "that nothing can win dear love but loss of dear love." One man must

lose the face another wins; one woman's heart break that another's may be in heaven. And in this for all gentle hearts that love there is great sorrow, and they would often willingly give up their own happiness rather than that another should suffer for their sake. But alas! it is of no avail. Tenderness we can command, but love is not in our power to feign; and, though pity be akin to love, who would accept it in exchange? It is such finer difficulties of love of which the world knows nothing, and, indeed, the love that the world does understand needs some other name.

The whole world loves a lover! On the contrary, the world and love are natural enemies, and the kingdom of love is not here.



THE HOUR

By Harry H. Kemp

IN days of song and joy
Time silver-streaked my hair,
Death hurled mirth from mine eyes,
Age left a crow's-foot there.

But, though you've crushed my flower
And marred my dewy prime,
I was a God an hour,
O Life, O Death, O Time!



STILL IN DOUBT

RALPH—Before proposing to those two girls I couldn't make up my mind which was the prettier.

IRENE—How is it at present?

"Now I can't decide which one is the homelier. Both refused me."

OUT OF NAZARETH

By Grace MacGowan Cooke

“I WOULDN'T 'a' keered so much ef you had 'a' told me. The very idy of you weddin' a gal out o' that thar Melungeon tribe, an' fetchin' her home hyer without namin' a word to me! Hit'll kill me! I feel a-sinkin'! I'm took thest like gran'mammy was when yer Uncle Dan'l fell over the bluff! Hold me up a leetle, Elviry. Shook, hand down that turkey-tail fan. You Ga'nt, git the hot water ready fer my feet. Take that gal out'n hyer—don't ye see I'm a-gwine to have a spell?”

Such was the home-coming of Pheenie Gaither, Gordon Hightower's bride from over beyond the Far Cove. The big fellow stood, half-smiling, half-abashed, attempting to explain to his vixenish little mother that, while he and Pheenie had kept company ever since he went into the Far Cove neighborhood six months back to haul sawlogs, they did not mean to wed so soon, but that her people were moving to Texas. Pheenie herself looked quietly on at the antics of her mother-in-law. She was of outlandish blood—the Melungeons claim to be of Portuguese descent, a claim which seems warranted by the beautiful dark eyes, graceful movements, slim, finely-formed hands and feet among them, and which, in a measure, sets them apart from the other mountaineers. The clear, firm pallor of her little oval face changed not at all for the old woman's shrill accusations; she was used to unkindness, was Pheenie Gaither; she felt herself scarce good enough for Gordon Hightower, and she regarded his mother's elaborate agonies with an odd

sort of sympathy and agreement in their conclusions.

“Git out o' hyer, Gord. You an' her go in t'other room; yo' mammy has about so much carryin'-on to do, an' she'll be none the better for sight o' the gal,” counseled old Shook Hightower querulously.

“Mammy's got a spell,” explained Gordon, as he and Pheenie went into the kitchen.

“Mammy's got a spell,” repeated Semphoria to some of the younger fry who were being noisy in the back yard.

“Mammy's got a spell—a spell—a spell!” ran the word down the Hightower line, sending the half-grown twins fishing, setting little Idally and Eula Jane to playing at similar seizures out behind the small log barn; speedily clearing and darkening the house. The very chickens seemed to walk on tiptoe about the cabin and address one another in undertones concerning the little old woman and her “spells.” Within, the bridegroom sat whispering to his bride. There was no crying need to comfort her. If she could but have him, and be suffered in her husband's house, she was at present amply content.

Gordon was the sturdiest shoot on the Hightower tree. He had inherited the farm and everything upon it from the maternal grandfather, whose pet and favorite he had always been. This had always given the boy a unique position among them. Old Shook was something less than a cipher in the household; the little termagant he had married ruled him and her children so easily, so completely, that, when

other avenues of activity were wanting, she fell back upon "spells" as an outlet for energy.

The new wife was a mute, earth-born creature. Beautiful as a rare blossom, and almost as little given to pleading her own cause, she knew only to cling where she loved, to bow her head to the storm of opposition, of misliking—even of abuse and outrage if such should come. There was nothing but sweetness in her nature, which was as sound and true as a cup of clean water, or an ear of corn—she was as direct a work of God's hand as are these. In the months that followed she struggled hard, but mutely, to please, to placate, to win. Failing, she held herself only at fault, and endured in silence the slights, injustice, the petty persecution which her mother-in-law's mandate might thrust upon her. Loyal, loving, willing as a beast of burden, and yet always ready, at the smallest word of approval or kindness, to break into smiles and sunshine, the child's meek gentleness should have won any unprejudiced housemates. But no qualities could have availed one who had been married to Gord without the say-so of Mammy Hightower.

Gordon was deeply in love with his pretty girl bride. But he was abroad in the fields from dawn till dark; during the brief hours he was with her he seemed to see nothing greatly amiss, and to scarce comprehend the very little that she ever tried to voice to him of her growing unhappiness with his people. At best they were but timid hints, which she haltingly put forward; she soon ceased them altogether.

But upon a lowering day in February, when all the men were felling trees to clear land they took Gord out from under a big oak which had fallen askew—after desperate chopping and dragging at the great limbs—"dead," as the mountaineer phrases it. And when they carried him to the house on a hastily improvised stretcher of boughs, when after an hour or more of insensibility he recovered a sort of consciousness, he was plainly not himself.

It was a terrible time for Pheenie. Mammy Hightower promptly had what might be termed a series of confluent spells, so that she was more the invalid of the house than Gord, who lay unconscious in the great four-post bed with its gay patchwork cover. Though the mother-in-law shrieked again and again, "That thar Melungeon gal is at the bottom of this all! She's got to go. I want the house cl'ared of her befo' I step my foot in to take keer o' my son"—though these cries rang through the little cabin, Pheenie crouched at her husband's side, holding his limp hand, knowing instinctively what was to be done for him, and doing it before anybody could forestall her—till Salvania Hightower got up from her own bed and drove the young wife away.

"Me that brung him into this-hyer world o' trouble—to think I'm not the best and the onliest one to know what's good fer my son! Ef hit was soap makin', er plowin', er hoein' a patch o' tobacker, that thar outlandish critter might sarve. But I tend on Gord—they hain't nobody a-gwine to do hit but his own mammy."

She made her word good. Autocrat of her own little mountain kingdom, she thrust the child out of the sick-room, and had her hovering about the shut door, to be driven away with words which might have been like whips. But these were no scourge to Pheenie's mild spirit; she had been lifted upon her anguish, as upon a cross, high above anything that those about could do to her. The thing which really counted was to come.

The country doctor pronounced the case beyond him, opined that there would have to be surgery of some sort, and gave as the only hope the new hospital at Garyville, whither, he said, Gord might safely be moved. Pheenie, crouching at the window, listening with all her soul, heard this dictum, and heard, too, that Mammy Hightower, noisily rebellious at first, was finally brought to understand that this was the one chance for Gord's life, and to agree to the journey.

"Me an' Shook an' Semphory an' Ga'nt'll take him down to the cyars in the big wagon," she told the doctor, as she followed him out to the gate. "We'll lay feather-beds in the bottom; an' Shook had better drive keerful, er I'll take the lines myse'f. We-all air a-gwine to pack our pore boy to the hos-pittle at Garyville," she proclaimed, facing about on the family, which had come stringing after, "an' you chil'en kin run things hyer as best ye may; fer I'm bound to stay thar tell my son is well—er dead. Oh, my Lord—to think o' the trouble I have!"

A timid touch on her arm interfered with the hysterical outburst which was to have capped this lament. Turning, she saw Gord's wife, her bronze-gold hair loosened about her small pale face, her great dark eyes full of anguished entreaty.

"Ye sure air gwine to let me go 'long o' my man down to the hos-pittle—you couldn't no-ways be so hard as to keep me from Gord now," whispered the stricken creature. "You don't rightly sense how Gord feels, mammy. He sets store by me. He'll never fergive ye, ef he gits well."

Was it sight of a grief so much greater than her own, so much deeper than any her voluble, shallow, egotistic nature could nourish? Was it that concluding phrase, which claimed too large a share of Gord's affection? Who can say? The old woman turned upon the girl with:

"What on airth would we tote a disgrace like you to Garyville fer? Tell me to my face that my own son wouldn't never fergive what I done fer his good! Ef he lives he'll be mighty proud to be shet o' you. Ef he dies—anyhow, he'll die mine."

"Thar—thar—thar, Salvania," coaxed old Shook, "let the gal alone. We-all have got the wagon about ready. Put what ye need in yo' poke an' come along. Ga'nt's done gone to the neighbors to git he'p fer liftin' Gord," for he could not bear the set white misery of poor Pheenie's face, though she shrank back and said no more.

But when they had gone down the

mountain-side in the big wagon, carrying on soft-piled featherbeds all that Pheenie cared for in this world, she sat crouched on the doorstep for hours. Those who were left behind paid no attention to her; they had all been set tasks by the mother of the family, and were—according to their various tempers—eagerly about them, or formulating plans to evade them. Elvira, who was to keep the house, came into the kitchen in the middle of the afternoon and found Pheenie sitting at the table, eating. She had put corn-bread and bacon in a little bundle, and clad herself in her decent best—the dress, the hat, the good shoes, which Gord had bought for her.

"Whar ye gwine?" demanded Elvira; the preparations for a journey were too obvious to be disregarded.

"To the settlemint," returned Pheenie in a low, monotonous tone, staring straight before her. In all her life she had been to the village of Hepzibah twice, and upon one of those occasions she had ridden for a short distance upon a train.

Elvira was divided in her mind. Perhaps mammy would be glad to be shet of the Melungeon. But remembrance of many hard tasks patiently done appealed for the intruder, and she asked finally:

"Ye ain't a-gwine to quit Gord tell ye know whether he'll live or die, air ye?"

Pheenie shook her head. This girl who would talk affected her as a buzzing fly torments a sick man preoccupied with his pain.

"Talley Strunk," she said, naming a brakeman on the mountain ore road, the most notorious fellow in the neighborhood, one whose contact was pitch to any decent woman; "Talley Strunk, he used to think a heap of me. I'm a-gwine with him, ef I can find him."

Elvira's judgment had traveled down the mountain-side in the pocket of Mammy Hightower's linsey frock; and so, instead of herself questioning Pheenie further on this surprising matter, she caught up a half-grown brother, tossed him upon the one nag

left about the place, and sent him flying after, urging him to overtake mammy and tell her that Gord's no 'count wife was running away with Talley Strunk. As a final after-thought, she ran shouting with the requisite money to follow on by train to Garyville, if necessary. When Elvira came back to the kitchen she found it empty. And the evening of the following day Pheenie appeared in Hepzibah asking at the station and of the loafers standing about for Talley Strunk—an innocent girl, a beautiful creature, inquiring upon the streets for Talley Strunk!

He was soon found, and answered promptly to her request:

"Will I take ye? Well, I guess yes. Come on in the waitin'-room here. What's the matter? Air ye quittin' Hightower? Did he do ye mean?"

"No," she said in the same preoccupied tone she had used in speaking to Elvira; "Gord got hurt. They took him down to the hos-pittle at Garyville a-yeste'day. Mammy wouldn't let me go. She never did love me—I reckon I wasn't what they'd laid out fer Gord to wed—I wasn't good enough. But they've tuck him down there, an' won't let me go!"

She broke off suddenly. Why should she talk to Talley Strunk—more than enough to persuade him to take her?

"Well, you're good enough for me!" he said with rough kindness, "an' too good for Gordon Hightower, the best day he ever seed."

Pheenie's lips had parted to defend her husband; but the door of the caboose just ahead caught her eye; they closed, without a word uttered. She ran toward the car and climbed in.

"Ye'll be all right in here, Pheenie, if ye don't mind a tol'able rough crowd," said Strunk, lingering on the step. "Some boys will pack a bottle; an' ef they git to drinkin'—"

He paused and regarded her with pitying curiosity. She had not heard a word.

And so Pheenie went to her husband—in the caboose of a freight train, at Strunk's behest, as his friend and pro-

tégée, with three or four rough men, who leered and spat tobacco juice, and who, when the bottle had made the rounds a time or two—being always scrupulously offered to her—began to indulge in dubious converse. The child sat apart, her little face like a white flower in the dusk of the soiled, tobacco- and whisky-tainted air, safely cut off by her grief from sense of them and their talk. She had to go to Gord. If she could have walked and got there in time, she would have done it. But a body couldn't walk—not all those miles—in one night; there was Talley; he was the only possible means; Pheenie had taken it with no thought of the cost, just as she would have taken a worse, had it been the only one offered.

Yet swiftly as she had managed to go, considering her moneyless condition, rumor of her misdeeds had run ahead.

The Hightowers got the injured man to the hospital in good condition; and the operation necessary to raise the indented bone which caused his comatose state, and threatened paralysis or death, was promptly and successfully performed. Salvania Hightower, terror-stricken before all the paraphernalia of modern surgery, longing for an opportunity to impress the physicians at the hospital with her own importance, yet found herself in too great a minority to commit any overt indiscretion.

The advent of young Blev with Elvira's news the afternoon of the day upon which the operation was made, filled her well-nigh to bursting with information at which old Shook merely groaned, Gaunt grunted, and Semphoria sniffed that she didn't see how it made any difference. The grave, quiet doctors, the white-capped nurses with tall, stiff collars, none of these would care that the Melungeon girl had justified her mother-in-law's evil opinion of her; it was not till she was permitted to go into Gord's room and see him, conscious for the first time since his injury, that she found a satisfactory audience for the tale. He lay amid his pillows, weak and dreamy, but perfectly himself, examining the walls

of the room with curious eyes, and listening to the nurse who gently told him where he was and why he had been brought there. At sight of his mother, Gord's face brightened.

"Whar's Pheenie?" he whispered, and looked longingly over that mother's shoulder.

It was too much. The nurse, seeing Salvania quiet, sitting beside the patient and speaking low, turned and left the room on some errand. And the instant the door closed behind her the old woman began eagerly:

"Mammy's own pore boy, that thar low-down trash warn't never fit fer ye. Cayn't no good come out o' that Melungeon tribe. Don't ye grieve, Gord. The triflin' huzzy's done quit ye—afore she knowed whether ye'd live er die from yer hurt. She's run off with Talley Strunk. Elviry sent Blev down to tell me, an' I thort the sooner ye——"

Miss Duffy's hand descended upon Mammy Hightower's shoulder. It closed there like a vise. "Hush," whispered the nurse in the mountain woman's ear. "Don't you see you're killing him?"

"Well, I brung him into this world," Gordon's mother was beginning shrilly, as Miss Duffy's uncomfortable grasp raised her to her feet.

"Yes, and you'll put him out of it if you come here and tell him things like that. We are going to do everything possible for your son; we hope to save him; but you must be quiet here, and not interfere with the physicians or nurses. If you are not quiet—if you again disturb my patient—" Salvania's eyes opened wide to hear this authoritative woman shift the possessive from Gord's mother to herself, and call her son "my patient"—"you will be put out of the hospital and forbidden to see the boy again until he is—well," with a glance at the ghastly face on the pillows, "until he is in a different condition."

And Miss Duffy fairly pushed the old woman from the room, sending for Dr. Ashmore, the house physician, who came in and did what was possible,

earnestly endeavoring to assure the patient that his mother was mistaken, promising to send for the missing wife—declaring that she would be with him soon.

Thereafter the Hightowers sat on a bench in the corridor. Gord's fever mounted as the night grew. By fits he was delirious, and then he raved wildly, calling for Pheenie, crying to her, begging her to come, weeping at remembrance that someone had said she had left him—had gone away with another man. To the huddled group on the bench outside the sounds of these cries, these prayers and tears came fitfully, and the old woman was appalled by her own handiwork, amazed at such evidence of the boy's love for the Melungeon girl, realizing with deep chagrin that she had attributed her own opinion of Pheenie to her son, remembering with sinking heart what the poor child had said about Gord's not forgiving her if he got well.

About midnight, and just after nurses and physicians had struggled through a terrible paroxysm with the delirious man, whose strength waned as his fever waxed, and who seemed now almost worse when he was sane and conscious of his desolation than when he was delirious—about midnight there came creeping to the door of the hospital a weary, footsore slip of a girl, the night dew damp upon her loosened, bronze-gold hair, which hung unheeded in a crinkling mass about the slender shoulders. The delicate features were pinched from anxiety and exhaustion; the little oval face was pale and set, so that the wide, woeful, dark eyes under their golden lashes and tragically slanted golden brows were all that lived in it. She looked a poor little lost naiad, gasping in the harsh grasp of an alien world; and when the night porter questioned her she made humble answer.

"I am Pheenie Gaither—Gordon Hightower's wife. I come down to stay at you-all's hos-pittle with Gord, please, suh—to he'p nuss him, ef ye'll let me. I'd 'a' been here sooner, but I had a—a sorter trouble about—about—"

They put me off'n the train—beca'se— They put me off. An' I had to walk nigh onto ten mile; an' I'm awful skeered that you've done already—done already—" Her eyes fixed themselves on the porter's face; she could get no further.

In the hospital Gordon Hightower was supposed to be dying; and Pheenie was taken directly to Dr. Ashmore, who looked pityingly upon the appealing little figure. He saw that she was ready to swoon with exhaustion, distress of mind and lack of food—what remained of a lunch of bacon and corn-bread had been forgotten in the caboose when Pheenie left it hastily—and at once ordered a cup of coffee and some simple food brought. As she ate, in obedience to his command, he studied her, finding in her what he would have called a natural nurse, a silent, forbearing creature, with the endless patience of the earth itself; one to help and to heal where such as old Sylvania Hightower had wounded. The man in there was crying out for her with every breath; and each cry lessened his strength and his chances of recovery.

"It's a risk," he said; "but we're almost past talking about risks. He's not equal to many more of those paroxysms."

A few moments later old Sylvania, yet sitting on her bench in the upstairs corridor, tasted the humiliation of seeing Pheenie led past by the great doctor himself, and into that room from which she had been banished. As the door opened to admit them, she hoisted herself silently to her feet, and craning her head forward saw Gordon lying among his pillows, his blond face burning with fever against the white bandage, his eyes closed, his lips moving, moving, moving, in a low, continuous muttering. She saw them take "that gal" in and, ere the door swung noiselessly to again, saw them place Pheenie close beside Gord's pillows, where her two little hands caught and held his big wandering one.

When Gordon Hightower suddenly opened sane eyes, and fixed them upon

Pheenie's, Ashmore confessed a qualm of doubt. But the girl justified his belief in her. She smiled in her husband's face as innocently as she might have smiled at her mother's knee; and poor Gord's tormented soul recognized.

"He wants a drink o' water, lady," she said sweetly to Miss Duffy; and when they had held the glass to his lips and he had drunk—never taking his eyes from Pheenie's face—she put her head down beside his on the pillow, and in a voice that was like the plaintive noise of running water, told him all her story.

"They 'lowed I ortn't to come along o' ye, honey," she said mildly. "I reckon they 'lowed I would be foolish and skeered. But I knowed I wouldn't; an' anyhow, Gord, I couldn't a-bear to have 'em fix yo' head an' me not here. When maw an' pappy and the others had done went down the mounting, with you in the wagon, I thest put on my things an' walked down. I didn't had no money, an' I didn't know nobody to git any frum, and I couldn't walk hyer quick enough, so I ast Talley Strunk would he let me ride on his train. He 'lowed he would, and so I come."

Beneath the spell of that soft voice, with those small hands holding his, the big man had listened in absolute quiescence, nor did he stir as she made an end:

"He was sho' mighty good, Talley was; he fotch me willin'. But some o' them yother fellers what was in the caboose had a bottle, an' they got to drenken'. When we stopped at Noon-an's Crossing, ten mile above hyer, an' Talley went out when the engine whistled—I—they—I thort I better walk the rest o' the way, so I clumb down. Hit was ten mile. That's what made me so late, honey. But 'tain't no differ now, sense I'm hyer, an' yo' all right, an'—" sweeping the faces in the room with a glance as unembarrassed as a babe's—"ever'body's so kind an' good; hit don't make no differ now—do it, honey?"

"Hit don't make no differ," whispered the big voice that had raved and

shouted and cried upon Pheenie and cursed Talley Strunk for hours; and it was as soft and calmed, as almost reflective as Pheenie's own.

"Going like a clock!" announced Ashmore with deep satisfaction, after noting the patient's pulse; "and his fever has dropped three degrees."

As the hours before dawn wore away, with but one nurse on duty in the room, and things settled into their wonted groove in the hospital, Salvania Hightower from that bench in the corridor had glimpses, when a nurse or attendant entered or emerged from the room she watched, of Pheenie sitting on her little stool by Gord's bed, sometimes drowsing, her head with its mass of bronze-gold hair resting on his pillows; sometimes awake, bending broodingly above him, seeming to shed visible peace and comfort upon him. In one of these glimpses she saw the nurse and young Dr. Furguson lift Pheenie, who was sound asleep, and lay her kindly beside her husband. She saw Miss Duffy herself unlace the dusty shoes, and heard her give the order to an assistant:

"Get a hot-water bottle for this child's little feet—they're like stone."

The last view she had, an hour or more later, was of Gord, awake and much refreshed, taking some nourishment from Pheenie's hand. She looked a moment, and then turned to the others with:

"Pap! Semphoria, Ga'nt! That thar train's in right now, an' I'm agwine home. You-all kin do as ye please; I ain't wanted here, and I'll not stay."

Without a word they followed her down to the door and saw her depart. She had ruled the roost too long for any to offer a protest against her decision now.

Salvania stepped out into the gray of a new day, which revealed to her a group of long-limbed mountaineers,

kindred and friends who had come down from Little Turkey Track on the early train to see how Gord fared. She pushed her way through these with a sort of flinching movement.

"Don't ax mé!" she returned, to their curious questions. "I reckon that gal kin tell ye the hull business. As fer me, I ain't nothin', an' I don't know nothin'."

With a strangled sob she hurried toward the gate. Through the door, which she had failed to close, the old man, Gaunt and Semphoria were visible, indifferent to her fate, absorbed in the joyful news that they were to be allowed to see Gord. Pheenie, who brought this word, looked them over with anxious eyes.

"Whar's mammy?" she inquired suddenly, and her gaze following that of the Hightowers, she saw the little old woman creeping away with bent head, the mute pathos of defeat writ large upon her wiry form.

Instantly Pheenie was out and after her, first touching her timidly upon the arm and begging her to return, then, when she saw she was not repulsed, and still was unsuccessful, laying hold of her and crying out:

"W'y, he's yourn, befo' he was mine, mammy. I don't blame ye for thinkin' I warn't half good enough fer Gord—I don't hold no grudge fer nothin'. Jest try to put up with me, mammy, like I am, an' come on an' see Gord, 'ca'se he's right peart this mornin', an' he'll be mighty proud to see you."

Poor old Salvania hung back, dubiously.

"Don't you study about me sayin' he'd never forgive ye for not lettin' me come along of you-all an' him," urged Pheenie with swift intuition. "Come on back! I'd 'most as soon lose him myse'f, as to part him from his maw what loves him so."



THE HELPMET

By Mary Tracy Earle

I HAD been sitting for days beside the bed in which Adela Keene lay silent. She had sent for me to come to her in this, so evidently her last sickness, yet it seemed to me that my presence counted for so painfully little in the hushed pause in which we all waited for the end. There was practically nothing I could do for her. Every duty had been assigned to others more practiced than I, long before I came, and it did not seem to me that she was even the happier to know that I was there, yet at times I was acutely aware that her thought was centred on me, and that she was thinking constantly in the intent, lucid way which had always made her mind so penetrating. Sometimes she would lie for hours with her strangely bright eyes fixed upon me while I sat by with an increasing, heart-heavy discomfort, or shared with her husband the intimacy of the sick-room.

At other times, when she lay with her eyes closed, my mind, in seeking some relief from the tension around me, would wander back into the interests from which I had been called. It was a physical relief to think of the far land where I had been at work—of the sun-flooded country, of the low roofs of the towns, of the bright, narrow streets, even of the musty books in which I had been studying, and of the kindly, simple, guileful people who had surrounded me, and who had taken me to their warmer, less complex hearts.

From such a moment of escape I was aroused by the knowledge that Henry Keene had slipped futilely into the room, had stood for a moment at the

foot of his wife's bed staring at her wasted face, and then, with a sudden, ungoverned sob, had retired at a motion from her. Her eyes had unveiled themselves and were once more shining on me, and her expression was so sublimated and concentrated that I felt myself distinctly in the presence of something beyond the natural. It was not like facing a disembodied spirit. It was more as if some urgent thought of hers confronted me, set apart from all feeling.

"Be patient a little longer," she said, breaking our long silence, and I knew that she had felt how my mind had been wandering.

I laid my hand over hers in which even the bony structure seemed thinned to translucence. It was needless for me to speak. I felt that, just as she had read my sense of futility and my restlessness, she was reading my quickened hope that now I was to be of some service to her.

"You all wondered when I married," she said at last. "You thought that I was nothing but mind, that I wanted nothing but the career I had planned. You thought that a woman with an intellect could live with all the deeper needs of her nature unsupplied. Isn't it true?"

"We were surprised," I admitted.

"Even you, who ought to have known," she went on. "But I think in these later years, watching me with my husband and my boys, you have understood, haven't you? You have seen how much I had—how much more than you, for instance?"

It was true that my existence had sometimes seemed narrow and lonely,

while she, in spite of the complete surrender of her earlier hopes, had often seemed to me to live the most perfectly rounded life I had ever seen. It pained me that the greatest interests of it had been her husband's and not her own, but she had given herself with no reserves.

I suppose my face told more than I could have told in words, even then and to her. Her eyes suddenly filled with an appeal.

"Promise me," she said, "that you will marry Henry."

Even now I can feel the shock of this sudden uncovering of her purpose. I could say nothing. Perhaps it did not matter. She was evidently prepared for the way I took it. She had allowed for everything. She made a patient gesture.

"You wonder how I can ask it," she said, "loving him. But you see I stopped loving several days ago. Since then I have been trying to think out what will be best. After I began to die I stopped loving even Henry. That gave me time to look backward and forward—to judge—and then I sent for you. I am not altogether selfish. I know that you are lonely. Any woman could be happy with him. And the position—you might be proud of."

Although the last words rang so false, I did not see, as I have since seen, that, in its lonely survival of her heart, it was inevitable that her mind at times should go too far. "Adela," I said in distress, "when did you or I ever care for mere position? I couldn't—he couldn't; it would be a sacrilege."

"Henry is a man who will marry *someone*," she said.

I leaned toward her, pityingly. She might say that she had stopped loving, but what was this except a subterfuge of love against its own jealousy? If she planned his remarriage for him, if she selected the woman who should fill her place—and selected one for whom he could feel nothing more warm than an intellectual regard—would not his inevitable future be less bitter for her to contemplate than if left to the guidance

of his own fancy, or folly as the case might be?

"You can't forestall his choice, Adela," I declared. "I am the last person he would think of in the world."

An expression so keen, so amused, so nearly contemptuous passed over her sharp features that I drew back from her.

"You don't mean—you haven't made him promise, already——?"

She smiled a little, and reached out her hand pacifyingly. "Try to be patient—I have thought it all out so clearly. Nothing escapes me. You are shocked now, but consider a minute. Think how you would feel if you were called away in the middle of everything—leaving every ambition incomplete."

As she spoke the last words, her voice for the first time trembled, but her eyes were still dry and piercingly bright. There was something indomitable in them that frightened me.

"You seem to have forgotten my life," I urged. "I have my work, my hopes, my ambitions, too, Adela, and you ask me to leave them all incomplete. If I have never married, it has been because I have preferred my own life to anything that marriage could offer."

Adela slightly raised one of her transparent hands. "Hush," she warned. "You are not quite honest when you say that. You have never felt a great love—no man has felt an overmastering love for you. You have not been tempted by a highly advantageous offer. No wonder you have preferred your own life. But you are old enough now to see more clearly—to see how poor a thing it amounts to, after all, and the life I offer you——"

I suppose I smiled. In the depths of my heart there was a passionate protest against this interview, a passionate regret that this—probably my last talk with Adela—should be given over to so ghastly an argument, but my brain and all my superficial feelings were on the alert against the encroaching force of her mind, and by my smile, I caught her up on a mere technicality, as a

lawyer might, who feared himself the weaker in the logical presentation of his case.

She paused an instant, searching my subterfuge for any honest ingredient deserving of answer. Possibly she found it in the knowledge that I was unprepared for such an encounter, whereas, as she lay so still watching me, she had been rehearsing her part in it for days.

"Yes," she went on gently, but very distinctly, "Henry made me the promise. He sat where you are sitting. After I had talked to him of his own future and the future of our boys, he sat silent a long time. Then he took my hand and held it against his heart while he promised me. I am telling you this so that you may know that he did it not merely to soothe my last hours, but honestly—solemnly. You may know he will keep his word."

Nothing that I had ever known of Henry Keene appealed to me as strongly as this picture of his promise, and I, too, sat silent for a long time. I could imagine what that promise had cost him.

Adela gave me time to picture it. Then, in her tense but unemotional voice, she spoke again. "I see so clearly," she said. "I know so well that it would be best—best for you both. I should die in such peace if I only had your word."

Something in the fact that there was neither regret nor reproach nor pleading in her voice told me that her end was very near; I would have thrown myself sobbing on my knees beside her, except that I knew that that time was past for all the importunities of grief. I shook my head.

"I cannot make you that promise, Adela."

She lay quiet, her eyes growing brighter and brighter until it seemed to me that all the mysteries of mental power and spiritual exaltation shone from them. When she spoke it was scarcely to me, although her gaze still held mine.

"Then I must find some other way," she said.

A moment after she motioned me to leave her. I did not see her again while she lived.

After Adela's death I went back to the work from which her message had called me. It was two years before I returned permanently to my home. In that time I neither saw Henry Keene nor heard directly from him, and, absorbed as I was in my own interests, I still had time to wonder more than once how the days were passing with him. I felt sure that Adela had told him of our last strange conversation, or at least of its outcome, and I was curious to know if the keen activity of her mind had devised any other plan or plans before the end.

After the period of deepest mourning had passed I sometimes heard of Judge Keene as calling upon an eligible unmarried woman, and I must own that I watched for further news, weighing in my mind the chances that each such call was the fulfilment of a promise to his wife. But whether Adela had thought out a long list of alternates, or whether, after her failure with me, she had concluded to leave the future to take care of itself, I heard of poor Henry as calling upon many ladies, but of his paying continued attentions to none. Rather, as I gathered upon my return, his friends began to feel that time would only confirm his mourning and they spoke of him as sadly altered and broken by it. His professional colleagues, too, referred to him as dull and crushed by his loss. He had always seemed to me a self-sufficient man; I had questioned if his love for his wife was in any way equal to her love for him, and, as I heard these accounts, I came to feel a continually deepening sympathy for him and, when I finally met him and saw how tired and changed he was, the constraint which I had feared for our first encounter was forgotten; I only thought how sorry I was for him and how dear he had been to Adela, and, as we shook hands and our eyes met, the bond of our old acquaintance, of what we had passed through together

and of our common love for his wife, drew us unexpectedly close. There was only a moment in which we could talk, but when we parted I knew that the moment had been a comfort to him; even without his promise to call on me I should have known that he would come.

In the short interval that passed before I saw him again I was very happy in the thought that in a certain sense I might be able to do what Adela had wished. If Henry and I could be good friends I should be able to save him from the unbearable loneliness which might otherwise cause him to fall in love a second time. He had already passed through the hardest years, and the marks which they had left upon him touched me as I had not thought that they could. I could no more have considered marrying him than I could when Adela made her proposal, but I dreamed like a girl of taking some part of her place in his life. The dream was short, for he called very soon.

Our meeting was not quite as easy as it had been before. I was aware that he held my hand an instant longer than he ought, obliging me to withdraw it.

When we were seated, and before I could speak, he said:

"I want to thank you for the way you helped me the other day. When I met your eyes, your look of sympathy and understanding, it was literally as if the sunshine, the light that makes life possible, had reached me for the first time in two years. I don't mean that people haven't been kind to me; they have made every effort—sometimes it has been painful to see how hard they have tried to comfort me in some way. But with you it was so different. Your voice, your eyes, everything had a message for me. I could see that you had suffered—that you knew something of what I had suffered—" He broke off, his eyes filled suddenly, and, turning away from me, he sat with his forehead bent into his hand.

I could only wait. If his feeling had

been less deep, if the frankness with which he disclosed it, the triteness of the symbols by which he expressed it had not been perfectly natural, perfectly free from self-consciousness, I should have had contempt for him. But, though I was thoroughly uneasy and uncomfortable, I felt no contempt. My heart ached.

After a time he lifted his head and faced me again. "It seems so strange now," he said, "to think how for two years I have dreaded coming to you. You don't mind my telling you now that I have dreaded it? In all that agony of loneliness I couldn't keep my promise to Adela; I postponed it from day to day, from month to month. I couldn't trust her supernatural foresight—her wisdom. I felt that to speak to you like this would be impossible—if possible, it would be a sacrilege."

"Wait," I said. "You mention your promise to Adela. Didn't she tell you that I refused to promise? Didn't she set you free from that pledge which you gave her when you were too broken-hearted to refuse her anything?"

I wonder that the harshness of my voice did not jar across the poor man's sense of our perfect sympathy and understanding. He seemed not to notice it except by a slight, indulgent smile.

"She told me that you had refused, but she was wiser than you or I," he answered. "She didn't release me from my promise. She said I must speak to you for myself after—after I had tasted my loneliness to the full."

I suppose I said nothing. I only remember that as he spoke I recalled the light in Adela's face when I refused to promise her. How clear it was, how unresentful, how confident! It seemed to force me to give her plan a fresh consideration and, oddly enough, the feeling that there was any sacrilege in it had disappeared. Something in Henry Keene's unexpected simplicity had eliminated my repugnance. He was not the prosperous judge offering me a position. He was a lonely man

claiming the comradeship which his wife had advised, and claiming it as frankly as a child might. Adela had been wise enough to know that what he, in his intense humanity, had suffered would plead for him more eloquently than her disembodied wisdom had pleaded. How it might have ended if he had left me to think it out for myself I cannot tell, but without warning he bent forward, gathered my two hands in his, and, lifting them, touched first one and then the other pleadingly with his lips. When I drew my hands away his eyes kept up the petition.

I shook my head slowly. The very force of the appeal frightened me. Much as I pitied him I had had no conception of the man's dependence upon some close human relation. He did not love me as I suppose he had loved Adela, as I know Adela had loved him; he did not pretend to such a feeling, yet in that moment while his gaze held mine I could see how his demands upon my comradeship, my sympathy, would absorb my life. If I had loved him—but Adela was right, I had never known a great love and it was too late for me to look for it; certainly Henry Keene could not call it forth. On the other hand, Adela was wrong when she fancied that any worldly advantage could pay a woman for such a complete yielding up of her life as this man would ask; compassion would not be enough to warrant such a sacrifice or to assure its permanence.

"I must answer you as I answered her," I said at last. "It is impossible for me to marry you."

Never shall I forget the blankness that swept his face nor the agony which followed it. "But what am I to do?" he asked. "What am I to do at night when I come home and find the house empty?"

"Read, study, see your friends," I answered.

He pushed back his heavy hair and I saw that his forehead was wet. "When I read, my eyes blur," he said. "When I try to think or study

my mind waits for a stimulus that it has depended on for twenty years. Some men keep their professions in their offices. Adela shared mine. I never had a case to plead or a decision to make that she did not know every fact concerning it, every clause of the law bearing on it. But now—I go home and find the house empty——"

He got to his feet and began to pace the room, his hands clenched at his sides, while slowly but clearly there dawned on me the true explanation of Adela's anxiety that I should promise to be his wife. I had been grossly unjust in thinking that she was jealous of his future love for some other woman than herself. Jealousy she had never shown. The explanation lay rather in the unshrinking clearness of vision which had always characterized her. Knowing her husband as she did, she had spared herself neither the certainty that he would marry again nor the fear that his choice would fall on some woman totally unable to share the graver interests, the profound mental labor, the intellectual development upon which professional advancement, his future prosperity and honor depended. Now at last I fully understood how her intense mental activity and acuteness had been satisfied after she abandoned her own chosen work, and it seemed less strange to me that her mind rather than her affections had lingered last in her frail body. She knew the completeness of his dependence on her, and in choosing me to succeed her and give her husband the mental comradeship on which his future depended she had paid me a compliment which I poorly deserved; yet I could not alter my decision, even after understanding her choice. Indeed, the more I comprehended of this strange matter the less inclined I was toward poor Henry Keene, even though he paced back and forth in an abandonment of desolation and helplessness so sincere that it dignified him.

At last he stopped in front of me, his clean-shaven jaws squared obstinately.

"It is not possible that you think I have only spoken to you in order to keep my promise, is it?" he asked. "You can't fail to understand that after our eyes met the other day my whole heart went out to you and I knew that if I could win you, life would be possible again? You must pardon me if I thought those few moments meant as much to you as they did to me. Perhaps I offended you by taking too much for granted, but now you must listen to me——"

I tried to stop him, but I think that the hopelessness of persistence was finally borne in upon him more by his own weariness than by any words of mine.

It takes a strong nature to assert its freedom from the claims of others—even the unjustifiable claims—without suffering from self-accusal, and for months after Judge Keene had thrown himself upon my charity everything I heard about him was an acute reproach. His friends, knowing me to have been his wife's former comrade and most intimate acquaintance, confided to me their anxieties about him. It seemed to them that in two years any man ought to have pulled himself together after his wife's death; the break in his powers alarmed them and they were beginning to fear that in some way the shock had been permanent. As for the outside world, trusting blindly to his reputation, it did not yet dream of withdrawing its faith in him, although it could not fail to see that he was shattered in health. From innumerable sources I heard how each month added to his look of age and illness, yet, when I met him on the street, six months after our interview, I was scarcely prepared for the change in him. He had grown markedly gray and the lines of his face sagged as if with confirmed feebleness.

I should have bowed and passed him, but he turned and asked if he might walk with me.

He did not speak at first, but after a few moments the sense that he was looking steadily at me constrained me

to meet his eyes. They were indeed fixed on me, and with a strange expression. I had feared that he would renew his pleading, but there was no pleading in his gaze. It was as keen and dispassionate as Adela's had been on her deathbed; I nerved myself and let him search my face until he was satisfied.

"Women of your calibre have very little compassion," he said at last. "My wife was the only woman of brains I ever knew who had a heart."

"Your wife loved you," I answered. "She showed you her heart. She would not have shown it to another man."

We walked on for a while in a silence which he broke in the same cold, rather hard tone in which he had spoken before. "For my wife's sake—because she wished me to marry you—I had made up my mind to beg you to consider the subject again. You see, probably the world sees by this time how my loss has overwhelmed me. I do not expect, I have never expected, to find a woman who could fill Adela's place, but without the comradeship of some true-hearted woman I cannot live. And I have much to offer—a dignified position, ample means, tenderest consideration, love—I am not ashamed to say it, for in my great loneliness my heart will go out to the first tenderness it meets—but I see that it is useless to offer all of this again to you."

His quiet, lucid exposition was even more like Adela than the calm searching of his eyes. Perhaps a word of sympathy would have transformed him into an eagerly pleading suitor, but I gave him no sympathy, though I was unaccountably breathless and tremulous as I answered:

"It would be quite useless. But I am not the only woman who might help you. Why not go to some of Adela's other friends?"

The light of half-contemptuous amusement which crossed his face showed me what I might have guessed. I must have been merely one in a long list, and it seems strange to me still

that there had not been one to accept him, either through pity or self-interest.

"Educated, cold, stubborn—how can such women understand or pity loneliness?" he asked. "As I said, Adela was the only woman of brains I ever knew who was not heartless. But leave out the brains and there is no lack of simple, natural, loving women, and you will hear of me as married very soon."

"But how about your career—your profession?" I cried out in genuine alarm. "If you marry a brainless woman how will she inspire you—how will she help you to think—to study—to—?" I broke off, for a vision of Adela's husband sinking into contented but obscure domesticity as the husband of a commonplace wife was more of a reproach to me than the failure of his powers in loneliness had been.

He smiled again, at first ironically, but gradually a certain fixity and elevation of purpose came into his face, so that I was again impressed with the similarity between the expression of his eyes and that of Adela's.

"Those questions come with bad grace from you," he declared. "But be assured of one thing; I have come to a low ebb, but I shall retrieve myself. I shall not give up nor fail. If I marry a woman who cannot help me to command my powers, *then I must find some other way.*"

As he spoke his final sentence, the identical words which I had heard last from Adela's lips, I found myself deeply stirred by the sudden admiration which he woke in me. I could almost have permitted it to carry a message from my gaze to his, but something, something in the habit or the pride of consistency, restrained it. Instead, I looked at him with a rather solemn sense of the finality of this encounter.

"I hope you may succeed—I think you will," I said gravely.

His lips tightened a little. "I know that I shall," he said, and although he walked on with me for some distance, that was the real end of our interview.

It was not long afterward that he

made his choice. I must confess that it was not without a shock of discomfort that I saw him first after he had entered this final cycle of bereavement—the cycle in which he found comfort. In a certain sense it was a relief to see him smiling again, ostentatiously well-groomed, and—it seemed to me—almost as ostentatiously basking in the sympathy and comradeship he had begged so vainly from the available women of Adela's class. Yet his choice reproached me and I found myself unreasonably thinking that with patience he might surely have found someone better fitted to the place. It was the old, old story of a lonely man's complete folly, or so it seemed to me—the story which Adela had foreseen when she said, "Henry will marry *someone.*"

At the time I did not realize how wonderful it was that he had sought so faithfully to avoid such a choice, since shallow, affectionate, admiring women have been strewn so abundantly about this earth for the benefit of the bereaved.

I did not regret my decision, yet an indefinable pique added to my expectation that Henry Keene would now lose his hold upon the clauses of the law, which he had so often discussed with Adela, and be reduced to interesting himself in the advertisements of milliners' openings and in recipes for new desserts. It was, with wonder, therefore, that I heard, as time passed, of the complete rehabilitation of his powers. His professional friends, indeed, claimed for him that his work was becoming even more brilliant than before his wife's death, and that his whole handling of the machinery of the law showed increasing breadth of power.

Over this fact, as time and increasing testimony confirmed it, I brooded faithfully; for, while it exonerated me from the sense of having proved a faithless friend, it set at naught all my preconceptions. It was impossible to reconcile the sincere helplessness of the man, as he had begged me to take pity on him, with this new ability to stand

alone. I could not believe that the break in him had been caused merely by the loss which his love had suffered. The completeness of his downfall had been due to the fact that he had been stricken on all sides—in the primitive love of the man for the woman whom out of all the world he had chosen, in the tender affection which grows out of long and patient comradeship even without love as its base, and in the deeply rooted habit of dependence upon mental aid. His new wife supplied Adela's place in none of these ways. Even if he had spoken less plainly to me before marrying her, I should have known that she was no more capable of inspiring his deeper passions than of sharing his more abstruse thoughts. I even doubted if any number of years as his wife would ever make her completely his comrade even in the smaller affairs of life. He petted her, I could see. I felt sure, too, that she loved him, had been flattered by his choice, was proud of him in her uncomprehending way, and domineered over him in small things with a luxurious sense of power. But what there was in all this to quicken the failing springs of his intellectual life I could not see.

Light came to me at last in a mere glimpse of him, myself unnoticed, as he sat reading a few seats ahead of me on his way to his country-place at the week's end. I said reading, but rather he was studying some typewritten document of legal aspect of which he would read a section and then pause to ponder it profoundly, often with his eyes lifted from the page. He was so turned in his seat that I could see his face. In the slight tension of the muscles around the eyes, in the line between the brows, and in his absorbed, luminous gaze, I was suddenly aware of the striking resemblance to Adela which I had noted in our last real interview. It was more than the likeness which a husband and wife so often show; it went deeper, reaching the very fiber of his thought and the very method by which he guided it, as if in some way, deprived of that wonderful trick of mind by which she had made all

things lucid, in his tragical necessity he had studied it out and mastered it, acquiring it for himself.

Someone with a more transcendental turn of thought than mine might have believed that she was directly helping him, having found some way of coming back across the barrier of death which had at first divided them. For me such a belief could not exist, yet the revelation of her presence in him was as complete and as convincing as if it had been possible for me to explain it in some mystical way. This was not the man whom I had seen of late, the man remarried and ruled by a hundred childishly feminine whims. This was Adela's husband, and grown mysteriously more worthy of her than he had been while she lived.

But why, then, I asked myself as I sat on, thinking of him long after he had left the car, why had he not been content to work out his salvation alone without the second marriage? The answer to that question came to me out of the faint dissatisfaction which even this new vision of him did not completely banish from my remembrance of my own part in his story. The factor of the encroaching power of loneliness was one which through my life I had persistently ignored. Strength, it had seemed to me, came only from independence, yet when we clearly see the abyss in which the human soul gropes forward, as we must see it after the death of those we most love, it is too appalling to be faced alone. If a dog to lick one's hand or a cat to purr at one's side can be a comfort, how much greater is the comfort of even a shallow woman's love.

Adela had been far-seeing—her only mistake having lain in the fact that in the strange detachment in which her mental powers had outlived the rich endowment of her heart, her vision had overlooked the fact that her interference made impossible the very outcome for which she planned. Naturally, inevitably, Henry Keene and I would have been brought together by her death, and, without the shock of her intervention to waken all the self-

conscious scruples which are inherent in a woman like me, I should have been won by his need.

Now that it is the strength of her love that has nerved him, the strength of her pride that has inspired him, the strength of her mind that has at last sought out and strengthened and freed the subtler powers of his, I like to fancy that she herself would recognize that in so far as concerned his future she did even better than she hoped.

To say that I am sorry to have missed the place that the new wife fills so well with her childlike demands

upon him would be too much, for even in the few instants when we were most in sympathy, I have never loved Henry Keene. But as the years pass and it seems more and more likely that I shall never really love any man, in my moments of loneliness I realize that I have missed what might be called a working chance.

On the other hand, when I think of what a true love is, I am profoundly thankful that it is not I who sit at one side of the evening lamp while on the other side Henry and Adela work out their problems.



THE DREAMS THAT NEVER CAN COME TRUE

By William Hamilton Hayne

AS mountain heights transcend the vales,
 As daytime shames the dark,
 Or as the moon's full splendor dims
 A glowworm's tiny spark,
 So, in the spirit's cloudless blue,
 As sunrise to a star,
 The dreams that never can come true
 Transcend the things that are.

As giant trees o'ertop a fern,
 As blooms outshine the grain,
 Or as the sea's deep anthem drowns
 The lyric fall of rain,
 So, in the spirit's cloudless blue,
 As sunrise to a star,
 The dreams that never can come true
 Transcend the things that are.

As life is loftier than death,
 As thought outreaches words,
 Or as the lark's voice soars above
 The pipe of Winter birds,
 So, in the spirit's cloudless blue,
 As sunrise to a star,
 The dreams that never can come true
 Transcend the things that are.

THE BEAUTY OF THE LAW

By Ellis Parker Butler

MRS. FOLEY stood in her own backyard at the foot of her own apple-tree and shook a barrel-stave angrily at the branches above her.

"Will ye come down," she shouted, "or will I be comin' up after yez? Come down, ye dhirty yellow haythen! If ye don't come down th' nixt minute, I'll have th' law on yez, fer I will not be climbin' trees after yez, wid my age an' heftyness."

She slapped the barrel-stave against the trunk of the tree.

"I'll have th' law on yez!" She yelled again. "Phwat d' yez think, annyhow, climbin' my tree as naked as th' Lord made ye? D'ye think ye'r' back in Africky, that ye kin be insultin' respectable people an' shakin' th' apples off their trees?"

Up in the tree a little brown Filipino man sat comfortably hidden by the leaves, eating an apple and grinning. Across the limb on which he sat hung all his garments. In the midst of civilization he had reverted to his native manners. He paid no attention whatever to Mrs. Foley. If she was annoying him, he was not so impolite as to tell her so. Mrs. Foley waited with almost audible patience until the minute was up.

"All right fer yez, then!" she cried, throwing the barrel-stave angrily upon the ground. "Ye'r' no gintleman. I've suspected it, all along, an' now I tell ye so t' yer face. I'll see phwat Pat Ryan, th' constable of th' peace, will have t' say t' yez. And remember this—he's got a fist as big as a ham."

When Company S, of the Regulars, was ordered home, Captain Goode

brought Lippo Sagasta along as a personal servant, and Lippo was a model little brown servant, all grins and gentle manners, and quite stylish in his white linens. Company S was ordered to Fort Vincent, near the town of Vincent, on the Missouri, and Lippo seemed to take kindly to American life. He learned to eat pie and wear choker collars and swear a little. He had all the really necessary accomplishments of an American gentleman, and he might have turned into an out-and-out American-American, instead of being merely an Asiatic-American, if he hadn't developed his one eccentricity. He *would* run away, and the only place he would run to was Mrs. Foley's, and the only thing he would do there was to climb the apple-tree, and take off his clothes.

Mrs. Foley was not finicky about foreigners. She could love a Dutchman as herself. She believed in the splendid old creed that America was made for foreigners, from the Pilgrim Fathers down, and she was willing to do her share in assimilating the foreign born, but she drew the line at assimilating an undressed Filipino who would do nothing but sit up in an apple-tree and sing profane songs in a tongue that sounded like cracked ice in a gunny-sack. It did her no direct harm, but it irritated her. It violated her rights as secured by the Constitution of the United States. There is nothing in the Constitution about clothesless Filipinos having permission to sit in the apple-trees of Irish ladies and sing. Even the Thirteenth Amendment doesn't say that.

Once isn't bad, and twice isn't bad,

but when it comes to every day in the week, even a patient person might get angry, and Mrs. Foley was not a patient person. She wasn't going to stand it any longer. Lippo Sagasta either had to wear his clothes or keep out of the apple-tree.

Pat Ryan, when he came, stood with Mrs. Foley under the tree and looked up. He swung his club behind his back, and gazed at the tree carefully. Then he moved to one side and the other.

"I see him!" he declared, at last, "I see th' foot of him!"

"And will ye send him about his business?" asked Mrs. Foley eagerly.

"Sure I will!" he assured her. "He has no right t' be here. 'Tis your tree, Missus Foley, an' ye kin say who kin roost in it. But not widout clothes, Missus Foley. Even *you* kin not say annyone shall roost in it widout clothes. Roostin' in trees widout clothes is agin' th' statoots of Vincent, an' agin' th' laws of th' county, an' agin' th' constytution of th' State, and *nobody* kin say *annybody* kin roost in trees widout clothes. I can't mesilf, and I'm th' constable, an' I cud if annyone cud. But I dunno as I iver wanted to."

"No lady or gntleman wud," said Mrs. Foley.

"True fer yez, Missus Foley!" agreed the constable. "An', if annything proves this Filipino Dago is no lady or gntleman, that proves it. I think highly of yer good sinse, ma'am."

He peered into the tree.

"I see th' other foot of him, now," he said cheerfully.

"I hev seen thim mesilf," said Mrs. Foley, "and I want t' see thim no more. Will ye mek him git down?"

Mr. Ryan swung his club, and studied the tree.

"He must be of th' opinion he's a monkey," he said, "atin' cocoanuts in th' jungle, fer no human man wud wan t' be——"

"I am of th' opinion he's a monkey mesilf," said Mrs. Foley with anger, "an' I nade no wan t' tell me. 'Twas not fer information of that character

I invited yez in, sor. Will ye mek him git down?"

"I was comin' t' that," said Mr. Ryan slowly. "'Tis th' law I was thinkin' of, fer I kin tek him down three ways, an' 'tis which way t' tek him I'm studyin'! I kin tek him down fer trespassin' on th' propputy, wich is agin' th' law; or I kin tek him down fer wearin' no clothes, which is agin' th' law; or I kin tek him down fer thinkin' he's a monkey up a cocoa-nut-tree, which is the same as crazy, an' is agin' th' law."

"Well, fer th' love of Saint Pat, git him down!" cried Mrs. Foley, "wan way or all ways. I dunnot care which. 'Tis all th' same."

"'Tis not," said Mr. Ryan calmly. "An' that's th' beauty of th' law. Ye niver know which ind of it t' take. An' ye never know is it th' hot ind or th' cold ind yer takin'. Now, here be three ways t' tek this Filipino Dago down." He counted them off on the fingers of his hand. "An' 'tis well t' study them well, fer I hev hed experience wid th' law. Here be three ways, an' t' you they all look th' same, but——!"

He pointed his club impressively at Mrs. Foley.

"But," he repeated, "whin they be three ways t' do wan thing th' logic of it is that wan of th' three is th' best. I hev had ixperience, ma'am, an' in th' prisint instance 'tis well t' go slow. For they be three ways an' they be three of us, you, an' me, an' th' Filipino Dago. An' wan of us three goes t' jail fer it, because there's a law broke. An', accordin' as I choose which way, it will be which goes t' th' jail. Wan way it will be th' Filipino Dago, an' wan way it will be mesilf, an' wan way it will be ye, Missus Foley. 'Tis that why I'm not mekkin' great haste."

Mrs. Foley folded her arms.

"Tek all th' time ye want, Misther Ryan," she said, "there be no hurry."

"I'm thinkin'," said Mr. Ryan, "'twud be best t' bring him down fer thinkin' himsilf a monkey. For if I bring him down fer dressin' up in no clothes at all, 'twud be fer me t' appear

agin' him, me bein' th' ripresentative of th' public; an' if I brung him down fer trespassin' 'twud be fer breakin' th' law regarding private property, an' 'twud be fer ye t' appear agin' him, th' property bein' your property. An' sich is th' beauty of th' law, Missus Foley, that 'twud be even odds me or you wud go t' jail instid of th' Dago Filipino."

"I wud bring him down as a monkey," said Mrs. Foley positively.

"I was thinkin' so meself," agreed Mr. Ryan, "for then 'twud be between him an' th' Commissioners of Craziness, and I niver heard of a whole commission of Commissioners goin' t' jail. Th' majority rules, an' 'twud be three t' one agin' th' Dago Filipino. So, ma'am, if ye'll go indoor, I'll take a shin up th' tree an' bring him down fer thinkin' he's a monkey up a cocoanut-tree."

Mr. Ryan began to take off his coat, and Mrs. Foley went in the house. She may have had a suspicion that something in the air of her back yard had a sinister effect on all men, and that Mr. Ryan was preparing to join Lippo as a monkey, but Mr. Ryan stopped at the coat. He could climb apple-trees better in his shirt-sleeves.

He was surprised to find that Lippo came down without a fight. In fact, Lippo seemed eager and anxious to come down. He welcomed Mr. Ryan with a grin of joy and gave him a grin of thanks when he helped him don his clothes, for dressing on a limb of an apple-tree is even harder than dressing in an upper berth of a sleeping-car. There is more room on a limb, but it is not as wide as a berth. Probably, on second thought, one is about as hard a place in which to dress as the other is. I have never dressed on a limb of an apple-tree, but I have dressed in an upper berth, and it doesn't seem as if anything could be more difficult.

When the constable was half-way to the jail with Lippo he stopped suddenly. There was one little beauty of the law he had forgotten. Lippo belonged to the fort, and the fort was under Federal law and not under

town law or state law. If he had arrested Lippo for lack of clothes, or for trespass, he knew Lippo's punishment belonged to the town, but he had never before arrested an inmate of the fort who thought he was a monkey. He had a very vivid idea that this time he had taken hold of the hot end, and he let go of it at once. He un-arrested Lippo so suddenly that it did not take any time at all to do it. He had no desire to interfere with the affairs of the Federal Government. For a moment he felt that his duty as a loyal citizen of the Union required him to take Lippo back to Mrs. Foley's yard and undress him and put him up in the tree again; but a private from the fort, named O'Shaughnessy, passed and relieved him of the duty. He was a good friend of O'Shaughnessy's because he had arrested him for drunk and disorderly reasons many and many a time, and O'Shaughnessy was one who would return a favor. He said he would take Lippo back to the fort and explain that he was an apple-tree and had been up a cocoanut eating a monkey. He repeated it a great many times to get it perfectly clear in his mind, and each time he shook hands with Mr. Ryan and told him he was his lifelong friend, and with Lippo, and told him he was always and always his dear brother; and he even wept about it, and wanted to kiss the constable to show there was no ill-will.

Constable Ryan watched them go, and shook his head doubtfully. He had a faint idea that he might, after all, have done just the thing he ought not to have done; but he let them go, and it was the best thing he ever did. He did not know it, but it was. Many of the best things we do are done because we don't know they are the best. If we did know, we would not do them. It would be setting too high a standard to be lived up to afterward, like the man who jumps off Brooklyn Bridge. He has to keep on jumping off the Brooklyn Bridge or people don't care whether he jumps at all.

When Private O'Shaughnessy reached

the fort he was immediately clapped within the guard-house to stew out, but he was so used to that that he always went as immediately as he could to the guard-house door when he reached the fort, and was disappointed if he was shut out of it. When he was himself again he had forgotten all about Lippo Sagasta, but the colonel commanding had received a brief letter from Mrs. Foley. It said:

"DEAR KERNEL, Pleas kepe that Filipino Lipo home at the fort. i am sick and tired of the news ants of him in my yard. he comes every day and is crazy climbing my apple-tree with his close off, clean too the skin A thinking hes a monky etin cokonuts. if he comes agin ile rite to the president at Washinton aboutt him and im truly yours, Mrs. Mary Foley.
P. S. i think hes crazy. M.F."

The colonel called Captain Goode and asked him about Lippo. He asked angrily and spoke about "the nuisance of letting a nuisance like that nuisance of a Filipino be a nuisance to the townspeople."

"The first thing we know," he said, "that nuisance of an Irishwoman will be writing to the President and—that would be a nuisance. You look up that Lippo. Keep him in the fort. Keep plenty of clothes on him. Keep him away from apple-trees."

"I will, colonel," said the captain.

"You bring him here!" said the colonel suddenly. "I want to speak to that Filipino."

Captain Goode went out. He went to his wife and asked for Lippo. Then he went to the sentry at the gate. Then he went to town and asked Mrs. Foley.

"Where is he?" she repeated scornfully, when the captain put the question. "Where he always is! He's in th' apple-tree, an' buildin' himself a nest there loike th' sparrow-robins an' turkle-doves. Is it a fowl of th' air or a monkey he thinks he is now? I dunno, but wan thing I do know, he has pre-impted a quarter-section of land in th' top of the Benoni tree, and is constytutin' it a Garden of Eden before the day of pettycoats."

The captain went to the tree and

called a few words to Lippo in Spanish. The reply was prompt. It was a pair of white duck trousers. The captain turned to Mrs. Foley with a serious face.

"Why!" he cried, "the boy is crazy!"

"And is he, now!" exclaimed Mrs. Foley, with much wonderment. "Cud it be possible! And yit," she said, "whin wan thinks of it, 'tis not ordinary fer a man t' roost in an apple-tree, bare t' th' skin of him, wan day after th' other. I might have knowed 'twas crazy he was!"

"He is certainly crazy," said Captain Goode.

"Annyhow," said Mrs. Foley, "we will pass over th' quistion of is he or isn't he, an' fer th' convanience of it, we will say he is crazy. An' I wish t' know what will ye do wid him, sor? I have no nade of him. If he wud kape his duds on, now, it might be fine t' hev him for an ornymint fer th' apple-tree, t' scare th' birruds off. An' if he was not crazy 'twud be not so bad, fer I have a strong imagination, sor, an' I cud imagine he was drest fine as a king, but bein' both crazy an' naked, I do not want him."

"He is most certainly crazy," said Captain Goode positively. "Harmless, but crazy."

He paced four steps to the east and four to the west, in deep thought.

"He must be put in the asylum," he declared finally. "It is the only thing to do."

"Asylum, or bandbox, or annything," said Mrs. Foley, "is all th' same t' me, but git him out of me apple-tree."

"I will go at once, and see the authorities," said Captain Goode.

"Tek him along wid ye," suggested Mrs. Foley.

The captain hesitated. He looked at the tree, and at the foot of Lippo, and at his uniform.

"I will send the authorities," he said.

The Commissioners of the Insane and Poor were three. One was old Judge Brant. He listened to the cap-

tain. The captain explained that one of the men of the fort was crazy; needed to be put in an asylum, in fact.

"The first thing," drawled the judge, "is to have the man pronounced insane. What is his name?"

"Lippo," said the captain. "Lippo Sagasta."

The judge slowly drew a paper from his desk and wrote this down.

"Ah—citizen of the State?" he asked. "Born here?"

The captain hesitated.

"He is a Filipino," he said.

The judge toyed with his pencil.

"Taken out his first papers?" he drawled. "Declared his intention to become naturalized?"

"Why, no," said the captain, "he—he is an American. All the Filipinos are Americans, since the war."

The judge laid down his pen and folded his hands across his stomach.

"This here State," he drawled, "runs her insane asylums for people of this here State. No others can get into them. You can't get in, unless you are a resident of this here State. And the State law says—the law of this here State says no alien can gain residence in this here State until he has declared his intention to become naturalized. Now, this here Filipino feller he hain't so declared. And bein' crazy now, he can't so declare. So he can't get no free board an' lodgin' off this country in no insane asylum. That's law. And you can see the beauty of that law is this country ain't put to no expense keepin' outsiders in asylums. Now, I pay taxes, and I can——"

"But—" cried the captain, "but what *am* I to do with the man? He's up Mrs. Foley's apple-tree, and Mrs. Foley won't let him stay there."

"Well, now," said the judge slowly, "I dunno *what* I would do about a crazy Filipino that is up Mrs. Foley's apple-tree and hain't declared intentions of being naturalized. I declare I don't! Seems to me I'd leave him up that tree till I could put the case before a Federal judge. That's what I'd do. You see, the beauty of the law is there's always a law for everything.

Now, you wouldn't think, offhand, would you, that there'd be a law about a crazy Filipino up Mrs. Foley's apple-tree? There be! That's the beauty of the law. Here's this Filipino, crazy, and the State can't touch him. And the county can't touch him. But the nation touches him. There's a law—a Federal law that says—let me see, what *do* that law say? It orders the deportation of any insane alien within a year after he has took up his residence here. I guess that's the law for that feller up Mrs. Foley's apple-tree. What you want is an order from a Federal court."

Every day, for a month, Mrs. Foley went out in her back yard and talked with Lippo Sagasta. She addressed him in anger and in pain; in sorrow and in reproach; in vexation and in despair. The State may have had one opinion about it, but Mrs. Foley had no doubt about Lippo Sagasta having gained residence. There he was! He seemed a permanent improvement of the property, like the house and the woodshed, subject to mortgage and taxes. Nobody dared remove him. The town officials did not dare, the county officials were afraid to, and the State would not, and the Federal authorities were coming to his case. They approached it for two months, and Lippo ate every apple on the Benoni tree.

When the Federal judge reached the case he gave his opinion promptly. The law ordered, he admitted, that an insane alien must be deported within one year after he has taken up his residence, but Lippo Sagasta was not an insane alien; he was an insane Asiatic-American. And an American, whether Asiatic or otherwise, is not an alien. And even if he was an alien he had not taken up a residence in the State, because the State wouldn't let him, and he couldn't because to do so he would have to declare his intention of being naturalized, and an American can't be naturalized, because he is already an American.

When the captain and the colonel, and Judge Brant and Constable Ryan explained this to Mrs. Foley they also

explained that it was all right and legal, and that she could not be held liable for anything Lippo might do. It was a great comfort to Mrs. Foley to know this, and she told them so.

"Praise be!" she said, "fer I was thinkin' mebbly th' beauty of th' law wud decide 'twas me duty under th' Constytution an' by-laws of th' United States of Ameriky t' adopt th' dhirty Filipino as me son, an' marry him as me husbind, an' become th' legal guardian of him, an' spind th' rist of me days hangin' apples on th' apple-tree fer him t' pick off fer cocoanuts. But now me mind is at rest. 'Tis all settled an' agreeable accordin' t' th' twinty-sivin laws applyin' thereto, that he kin roost in th' apple-tree foriver, an' not wan of th' twinty-sivin kin mek him wear so much as a neck-tiel An' not wan of th' twinty-sivin kin mek him come down out of th' tree! An' there be four aldermin of this town, an' wan mayor, an' th' constable an' six policemin, an' th' dog-pleece; an' there be three commissioners fer the crazy, an' a sheriff, an' four trustees of th' county; an' there be th' gov'nor, an' forty-two sinators, an' ninety-eight represintatives, an' th' militia of th' State; an' there be th' President an' th' represintatives an' sinators, an' th' army an' navy of th' United States; an' th' beauty of th' law is not wan nor all kin mek th' yaller Dago come out of me apple-tree!"

Judge Brant laid his hand on her arm.

"The law," he said soothingly, "the law is right, ma'am. But the meaning of the law has to be figgered out, sometimes. The law ain't got used to Filipino-Americans yet. But it will! The beauty of the law is that it ain't rapid, but it's sure. The law never thought of a bare Filipino up an apple-tree out of his head before, ma'am, but the law won't leave him there. The case, ma'am, will go to the Supreme

Court of the United States, and that court will settle the status of Lippo Sagasta. And when his status is settled, the law will tell who must bring him down."

Mrs. Foley sniffed.

"An' how soon sh'u'd that be?" she asked. "How soon sh'u'd th' Suprame Court settle up th' statues of th' naked feller?"

"Well," said the judge slowly, "it takes time. It takes time. If all goes well, it hain't goin' to take but a year or two."

Mrs. Foley looked past the judge at the tree.

"Wan or two years!" she exclaimed. "Shure, I kin see th' beauty of th' law now as I niver did before. Th' beauty of it strikes me all in a heap like, 'tis so treminjous! Wan or two years! Or mebbly three, belike!"

She leaned down and picked up the barrel-stave.

"Wan or two years! Well, I be no Suprame Court, an' I be fat an' hefty on me feet, an' no squirrel at tree climbin', but if ye watch me close fer wan minute, I'll show ye a beauty of a way t' git Filipinos down from apple-trees whilst th' Suprame Court is decidin' to settle up their statues for them."

There was a vision of blue gingham skirts sweeping the air, a grunt or two, and Mrs. Foley was in the lower crotch of the apple-tree. She swung the barrel-stave once, and there was a loud cry from the branches above her, and a little brown figure swung out on a limb, dropped to the ground and dashed up the road toward the fort.

"Go awn wid yez all," Mrs. Foley said shortly, "whilst a daycint widdy-woman climbs down. An' if ye be writin' t' th' Suprame Court on th' beauty of th' laws, ask them t' settle up th' statues of a barrel-stave an' th' muscle of Missus Mary Foley."



AN INTERRUPTED SERMON

By Harriet Gaylord

THE Reverend Julius Havenden entered his study on a Friday evening about ten o'clock, and settled himself to write his Sunday sermon. He had had a trying day among his various settlements and charitable organizations; he had been contending with gross forms of sin and irreligion; and all the while his message to his people had been shaping itself in his mind. He turned at once to the text he had chosen, and wrote it fair and large on the paper before him:

"Cry aloud; for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awakened."

Then he fell to pondering. Do people sin because they lose their faith, or give up their faith that they may be free to sin? Where should he find his cause and where his effect? He knew what was the orthodox belief, but he also knew life, and knowing life in every phase, he was sometimes tempted to believe sin relative rather than absolute, and faith hard to keep. Sometimes—he was very weary tonight—it was as hard to show others the way as it was to follow it himself. Big, hearty, magnetic, he had little of the simplicity of character ordinarily found beneath that externality. On the contrary, he had a puzzling and very wearing complexity of temperament which made him mentally live the lives of all with whom he came in contact. There could be no question of the value of the many-sided view of life he gained. No single issue merging into the intertangle of individual issues could he see, except

in its inevitable bearing on the great mass of humanity.

Tonight, unobserved and in repose, his face was weary, unguarded, starved, haunted, but at a rap on the door, he reassumed his habitual genial, smiling mask.

"Come in."

His wife entered. Cecilia Havenden was blond, ample, motherly, comfortable, and bovine; capable of no subtlety, no complexity, of comparatively little mental effort. He rose to place her a chair by the fireside, and his courtly deference and elaborate welcome indicated the intellectual and spiritual abyss yawning between them.

"Hope I don't disturb you, Julius," she said when they were seated. Her voice, also, was ample and bovine, and for fifteen years he had stilled his nerves to utter no protest at its clarion notes.

"I just dropped in to say good night. I suppose you won't be turning in for hours." She pointed her plump white hand toward his desk.

"No, I fancy not. My brain seems taking a holiday. It is good of you to give me an excuse to shirk for a few minutes."

She laughed comfortably.

"When I hear other women talk about how irritable their husbands get, I just have to do a little bragging. Think of being able to walk right into the middle of one of your sermons and you not mind! Actually, no one will believe me when I say you've never said a cross word since we were married. You're almost too good, Julius!"

He smiled and bowed across to her.

"Honor to whom honor is due! You are my wife!"

This remark was both safe and honest, and long custom had taught him to turn many such phrases. She beamed with pleasure at her own interpretation of his words.

"Oh, but I can't take all the credit," she protested. "That wouldn't be flattering to my taste in husbands, now, would it? Well, Julius, how has the day gone with you?"

"Oh, just as usual, Cecilia. Full of sin and suffering and poverty."

"I expect I ought to search your pockets when you talk like that. It's well I hold the purse-strings for house-keeping, or you'd go hungry."

"Hard-hearted Cecilia! You never do anything for the poor yourself, do you?"

"I can't let you beat me all along the line, can I? But I really came in to talk about Madeline."

He rose, walked to his desk, lighted a cigar over the lamp, then came back and resumed his seat.

"Yes?" he said in the same genial, hearty way. "What about Madeline?"

"Well, in the first place, she isn't happy and I can't make out what is the matter. Mr. Jermayne is coming back, you know, and I expect she hates to leave New York. But she won't talk to me." There was a plaintive note in Mrs. Havenden's voice. "Madeline never would. Black and white are more alike than she and I are. When she was a little girl, she'd go off and bear things by herself if pa wasn't near. He and she always understood each other, and ma and I. Queer, wasn't it?"

"Yes; family differences almost make one believe in the doctrine of reincarnation. You said in the first place. What comes second?"

"Oh, I just wondered if you couldn't get it out of Madeline what the trouble is and give her some good advice. People sort of have to tell you things. I recollect so well what she said about you when she came home to my wedding. Think! she'd been married two years then, and she is ten years younger

than I! She said, 'Cecilia, he is adorable!' the very first time she had spoken to you. Maybe she will tell you the trouble. Sometimes I think she and Mr. Jermayne aren't as happy as you and I."

Still that indulgent smile on his face!

"You have such unbounded faith in my powers, Cecilia. From what I know of Madeline, the task might be difficult."

"Well, I just thought I'd mention it and let you think it over."

Then Mrs. Havenden launched into an abundance of small concerns to which her husband gave his patient attention. The clock struck eleven, and she rose with a start.

"Mercy! you are long-suffering! But you won't sit up late, will you, Julius? Can't you write the sermon tomorrow?"

"I'll try to get my forty winks," he promised, as he kissed her good night. When she was gone his face grew haggard again, and he sat thinking, thinking. He started when another tap, soft and gentle, sounded on the door. His mask dropped into place instantly. With strained attention he called:

"Come in!" and Madeline Jermayne entered.

No two sisters, certainly, could be less alike. This woman was dark, with unforgettable eyes, slender, distinguished, subtle, as magnetic as himself, and, as he well knew, keyed and responsive to the same chords.

"My dear Madeline," he exclaimed, "this is a pleasure!"

"My dear Julius," she answered, "what a blessed hypocrite you are!"

There was a slight quiver of his frame, so slight she did not see, and her eyes were watchful.

"Not in this instance, though," he declared. "I am glad. I can't work tonight. See! I have only arrived at my text."

She leaned over to read what he had written, then looked at him with startled eyes.

"Julius! all day long I've been trying to formulate that cry, and just before

dinner I got out the concordance in the library and looked up the verse!"

"Telepathy again," he answered lightly. She took the seat her sister had vacated. He followed, and sat at the opposite side of the fireplace. For a moment neither spoke.

"Is God sleeping?" she demanded at last, her eyes revealing their sorrow unashamed. "Is God sleeping, Julius?" Her voice had the quivering, enticing warmth of a cuddling, tired child.

His attitude suggested alertness—the grip of a man of enormous will-power on his own dread of self-revelation.

"I think not," he answered; "I think not."

"But Julius, when the bishop told the little boy he ought to go to church because he was going, you know the boy's answer, don't you? 'Course you are. That's your job.' You have to say God doesn't sleep. But in your heart how can you believe it, when life gets so fearfully muddled?"

Again he walked to his desk and lit a cigar, she watching him closely the while. When he returned, she spoke again:

"Julius, I want to consult you. I must consult someone. I am so awfully, painfully adrift. May I?"

"I—that is what I am here for, I believe." He smiled at her. "But I warn you I have had a particularly hard day. I can't see very straight tonight. But I'll do my best. I'll try to see straight."

"Some way—sometimes, I— Oh, Julius, I do wish you'd just see crooked with me!"

His laugh was unnatural.

"Then we should both be awfully out of the path, little sister, shouldn't we? Tell me what the trouble is, if you wish. For a long while I have noticed you were seedy."

"Of course you've noticed it!" she cried vehemently. "Of course you have, and you've read me through and through, I fear, and know me better than I know myself."

"Oh, I assure you, no! No, by no means. No, you are not so easily read."

"But you know—oh, surely you know, that I—I hate my husband?"

His eyes were fixed on the glowing coals in the grate; hers were hungrily following his every move, his every expression, seeking a sign.

"Why?" he asked at last. "Why?"

"Because we are poles apart. Because we can never come any nearer. Because he—oh, I've had my wrongs. You would admit them if I told you. So would any court of justice, but about those wrongs I care not. I rejoice in them as an excuse for keeping away from a man whose personality I abhor."

"Why did you marry him?"

"Why does any silly girl of seventeen marry? There ought to be a law to make it impossible."

"Jermayne is coming home?"

"Yes. He has his mines in order in Brazil, and wants to open our London house for the season. He is coming for me next week. Julius—am I to go?"

"You—you think of leaving him definitely?"

"Oh, Julius, I must. Don't you know I must? You can't for a moment believe I ought to endure the daily, hourly martyrdom of living with a man I loathe!"

His face grew stern and tense.

"That is the hardest question, I think, which a clergyman ever has to answer."

She turned her face away from him, pressing it against the leather back of her chair.

"Is God sleeping or on a journey, Julius?" she murmured, and then there was silence. At last he spoke:

"I was wrong. The question you have asked me now is infinitely harder."

"Thank you! I appreciate your confidence. You don't keep up the old pretense, you don't give me platitudes tonight. I couldn't bear it if you did. No, Julius, I couldn't bear it. You know life is very difficult."

"Yes," he answered gently. "I know it requires all the courage brave men and women can summon to their aid. Life is very difficult."

"Julius," she went on, her face still

turned away, "I haven't told you the worst, but I'm going to now. You must help me bear it. No matter what you are bearing yourself, you must help me bear my trouble. Julius, it's hard to say, but I must say it this once."

It was well she was not watching him now that the crisis he had been warding off for months was imminent. His hands were gripping his chair as in a vise; his face was tortured. He dared this little respite since she could not see.

"Well, Madeline, tell me if you will."

"I must tell you, Julius. I—you see it was always bad enough, but now I—love another man." Her voice had fallen to a whisper.

"Yes? I'm sorry, Madeline, more sorry than I can say."

"Oh, you needn't be sorry about that, Julius. It's the greatest, grandest glimpse I shall ever have into heaven, I know. Because it is a stolen glimpse doesn't make it any less sweet. But to know all that is highest, and then go back and live the lowest—don't you see I can't do that? Oh, I can't, Julius, I can't, even if *you* tell me to."

"What will you do? You can't go to the man you love. He is not—he is free?"

"No, Julius. He is married to a good woman whose soul lives in an alley."

"He has told you that he is not happy?"

"No. He bears as I have borne—till now."

Julius's words were coming very slowly.

"Perhaps he will bear bravely and you will bear bravely—to the end. I hope so."

"Oh!" she shuddered, "so have I hoped that. But now John is coming back, I must decide, and all my courage is gone. Go with him, when this glorious love has come to me, unasked, unsought! Julius—I wish I could make you understand how I love—this other man." Her voice tore through every fiber of his being.

"There are no words to speak of the torments I endure, the bliss I try to bear. He is to me the wonder that he is to others, but he is to me what he is to me alone. I know his every thought, every fancy, every desire. He needs to speak no word of love. I know his very heart, and to me he is a god! Julius! Julius!"

She sprang to her feet, and he rose and faced her, white, stern, determined.

"Julius!" she cried again, "let me tell him that I love him! Let me say it just once with my lips, and then I will go away out of his life. Let me say it!"

He gripped her arm and held her away.

"No!" he cried. "No, by all that is holy, you must not tell him! No, you must not! Do you hear?"

"He is my god!" The words rang out defiantly.

He drew a fierce breath, then led her to the door.

"You must go! You have my answer! Go!"

He stood staring at the closed panels for a moment, then walked back to the desk, seated himself, and buried his head in his arms.

"God!" he whispered, and there was no answer. Three times he cried aloud:

"God! God! God!"

Still no answer. He drew deep, convulsive breaths.

Suddenly the words rang out behind him, mocking in their tone:

"Cry aloud; for he is a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing; or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awakened."

He did not raise his head. The worst had befallen. She had seen him in his weakness. He felt her kneel beside him, felt her head pressed against his arm, and shuddered through all his frame.

"I couldn't help it, dear!" she murmured. "You thrust me out, but I knew you didn't want me to go. I knew it was yourself you feared. And I stood there and heard your cry. I

had to come back and say it to you, dear. You know it! You know it! Julius, I——"

He sprang to his feet, both conquered and victorious.

"You shall not say it first!" he cried. "No, you shall not! Hear those words, then, for the one and only time. Madeline Jermayne, wife of another man, sister of my wife, I have loved you always with a love which seems preordained from the beginning of all time! Hear it, since you will, but know this is the end."

"Julius! Julius! I love you, I love you! You are my god!"

Again he put out his hand, but gently, this time, and pushed her away. He held her there at arm's length.

"It would be heaven," he said at last, "if there were no God to wake, no other heaven to hope for by-and-bye. We hope there is. We may not know—we hope. And listen, my dearest! It has always seemed to me there is something more imperative in this life than a man's duty to his wife, his home, his country, his church, his God, and that is his duty to keep faith with himself. For if a man does not respect himself, looking with charity on his own weakness because he tries to be strong, he loses his grip on life, he loses everything. A man cannot respect himself when he hurts other lives, when he seeks a lower level. We must climb, climb, and not fall and kill the faith of others. I don't want to do violence to my heart, to my nature,

to my instincts. I want to pick you up in my arms, dear woman made for me, and hold you there against the whole world, but that isn't keeping faith with myself. I see so much of that sort of thing every day, and its sordid end, and neither you nor I will stoop to it. I've fought this battle many times for you and myself. It's too late, too late, dear, for everything else but to keep faith with each other and ourselves, too late for everything but to stand up bravely and face the consequences of our youthful mistakes. God may be asleep, but we are not. We cannot take the risk. I am going to send you away from me now. We will never refer to this night again. Tomorrow we must think out the best plan for your future."

"Are you sorry we know?" she whispered, her eyes widely dilated. "You are my god and I must obey; but are you sorry we know?"

The revelation of his eyes made her draw in her breath sharply and utter a cry of joy.

"The knowledge will be my haven of refuge forever," he answered. "No, I am not sorry."

He drew her to him, and kissed her calmly on the forehead.

"God keep you, child! Good night!"

When she was gone he stood perfectly still for a long time, gazing at a crucifix hanging on the wall. Then,

"O God!" he cried, "art Thou asleep?"



NOT HAPPILY EXPRESSED

OLD GENTLEMAN—So you are anxious to become my son-in-law?

YOUNG MAN—Yes, sir. So much so, in fact, that I am willing to marry your daughter.



HARD TO UNDERSTAND

BIBBS—Some people get everything they go after.

GIBBS—Yes, and others don't seem to get what's coming to them.

A SOUL FOR ART

By Katharine Metcalf Roof

SHE looked, with her high-bred, uncommunicative face, oddly out of her element in the otherwise characteristic crowd of students—a crowd which was peculiar to just such studios as this of Arthur Wharton Miles. Yet the face of Honora in the setting of the Miles Voice Culture Studio was scarcely more incongruous than the countenance of Arthur Wharton Miles himself, as associated with the idea of music. It might well have been the face of a successful protagonist of patent medicine, which, after all, was not so remote from the profession of Mr. Miles (sometimes known as "Professor"), since he was one of that large class of voice-culture quacks who claim to "develop" the voice by various "systems," occult and mysterious, such systems being, one and all, labeled as the "only true secret" of tone production. It had been a little difficult, at first, for Honora to accept Arthur Wharton Miles, yet what was there that she would not accept to compass her ambition? Her eyes rested upon him now unshrinkingly, a composite, mild, vulgar face adorned with a profuse mustache. A large expanse of shirt-front, inclining gently outward, was revealed by one of those unclassifiable low-cut vests affected by professional men of his type.

His disciples were a strangely assorted crowd, yet seemingly congenial, save for Honora, who sat apart, pale, serious, concentrated; gracious to all who addressed her, yet with a subtle atmosphere about her which tended to keep the cordial fellow-pupil from lingering by her side.

There was an intense, long-haired

youth with aquiline features which proved to be rather thick in full face, who sang passionate tenor songs in a pinched, throaty tone that slipped easily into falsetto on the ascent. There was a blond young woman with a French name and a facial type that bore testimony to the genuineness of the name—prominent eyes, a receding chin and a nose with an angle at the bridge. She had also what Mr. Miles would undoubtedly have described as a "rounded form," a small waist and a shrill tremulo soprano. She sang flat with complacent brilliancy and coquettish facial contortions. She was preparing for light opera in this country, Arthur Wharton Miles informed Honora as he paused for a moment, gracious, but unbending, beside her chair.

Then there was a big, stupid, smiling, loose-limbed baritone who was a chemist's clerk by day and sang in the Old First Church on Sundays. There was a self-conscious, half-pretty young girl from Sioux City who had a voice which Arthur Wharton Miles was dissipating as rapidly as his method would permit.

As the future French queen of American opera ejected a last impassioned high note with a well-studied prima-donna head movement, the Western girl arose with a conscious flutter of music sheets and ribbons, and went over to the piano. After some preliminary coquetry with the male accompanist, and a glance including the tenor and the baritone, she began the opening measures of "Elizabeth's Prayer" in a strong, confident young voice.

"It is only her third week," the tenor whispered to Honora. "She's

a wonder all right, and so is Arthur Wharton Miles."

Honora smiled with a kind but faint inclination of her head for the ardent tenor. Elizabeth from Sioux City was pursuing the melody with the relentless force of an unbraked cable-car, now on the track, now on the cobbles. She paused, breathless, flushed, childishly complacent at the end to enjoy a burst of bravas from the tenor, the baritone and Arthur Wharton Miles himself.

She was the youngest and best favored of the female students. Honora rose to leave as the opening measures of Schumann's "Widmung" were proceeding, in a strained, manly contralto, from the throat of a woman wearing a high collar and tailor suit.

The well-favored one from Sioux City, following Honora's faultlessly fitting yet inconspicuous gown with her eyes, whispered to the admiring tenor:

"Just no voice at all, and she's dead crazy about it! Tough luck, ain't it? Professor Miles says she'd just give her head to have my voice."

"Well, you've got one all right," warmly returned the passionate tenor, who unfortunately had command of the language of passion only with the assistance of the printed page.

Honora was bowed out grandiloquently by the patent voice-culturist, who had respect for the dollars of all pupils. In the swift elevator of the great studio building she met a girl carrying a violin-case, who greeted her with a smile and a brief, "Living here?"

"No, I come here to Mr. Miles's studio," Honora explained.

The violinist gave her a quick glance. "Studying with him now?"

Honora winced inwardly at the "now," and answered merely in the affirmative. Then, realizing an expression on the girl's face, she added:

"You don't think well of him as a teacher?"

"He seems very popular," returned her friend discreetly, but added, as they reached the ground floor and stepped out of the elevator, "and ruins more

voices than any other fake in this building."

Honora looked shocked; then realizing that her friend was walking on with businesslike directness, walked along with her, quickening her graceful, measured movements to keep up with the other's rapid pace. She adjusted herself to the girl's unornamental directness more swiftly than would have been natural to her, for the dominating interest of Honora's life had somewhat accustomed her to the short-cuts of the professional mind. This girl was a good musician rapidly earning a place for herself. Her opinion was probably important.

"Who would you recommend?" Honora asked her.

"Why, in my estimation Mme. Behnke is the best singing-teacher in New York," was the prompt answer.

"I have not felt that Mr. Miles was really doing anything for me," mused Honora. "I have thought, too, that he seemed to be actually injuring the voice of a little Western girl who is studying with him."

"Sure to," responded the violinist, with the brevity of the overworked. "Go to Mme. Behnke. She's in the telephone book. You can depend on what she tells you." With a smile and a nod the violinist who lived by her art and called it a profession, boarded a passing car and was carried from sight, while the singing-pupil, who did not need to live by the profession and called it her "Art," with a capital—resumed the natural dignity of her gait as she skirted the edge of the park on her homeward way.

"Go to Mme. Behnke, you can depend on what she tells you." That last sentence recurred to Honora with a vague sense of discomfort. Perhaps no one in the whole world realized how passionately Honora Todd longed for a voice. Music had been the one emotional outlet of her repressed aristocratic life. Left an orphan at twenty-five with sufficient money to keep her in ease and comfort, she had lived with a well-bred chaperon in restful, artistically decorated rooms. She had

studied singing with one teacher after another for ten years. She had worked so tirelessly to find the right one to "bring out" her voice, practicing faithfully in all their different ways; yet the voice, in which she still believed as she did in her possession of a soul, remained obstinately concealed, undeveloped.

No one had ever heard Honora sing. She would reply, "Not yet," with a little smile to inquiring friends. Once or twice she had sung for a sympathetic woman friend who had no ear, and who had declared enthusiastically that her voice was beautiful. Honora had closed off her sensitive introspectiveness at that point. She had shut her eyes and permitted herself to taste of the joys of applause.

Honora was thirty-five years old now; becomingly dressed she looked easily seven years younger. Her face was of the mental, idealistic type, the eyes fine and thoughtful, the lips tending to thinness. She had voluntarily chosen art rather than life, for she had grown up in a circle that gave her abundant social opportunity. But from the beginning she had cared only for music. Yet with all her enthusiasm and willingness to work, with that peculiar inexplicable perversity that sometimes exists in such things, the acquirement even of ordinary proficiency as a pianist was difficult to her. Honora's expensive piano-teacher had often declared that Honora had to work twice as hard to learn the same thing as any of her other pupils.

She had spent a small fortune on her voice. She had gone to teachers who developed the voice from the chest tones up, and to teachers who developed from the head tones down. She had gone to teachers who insisted that the only correct method was to begin with the middle register. She had had teachers who believed in beginning with full voice, and teachers who kept their pupils humming for weeks. At one time she had had great faith in an instructor who insisted that it was essential to remain for months on a single note. She had tried a teacher

who gave her songs at once, insisting that in interpreting the feeling of the song the pupil must necessarily learn to sing aright. "The birds do not need to be taught to sing," this little woman had declared passionately. She was a rosy-cheeked, bright-eyed, vital little Western woman, and for many weeks she had inspired the reserved Honora with new life and hope. But the awakening and reaction had come and she had gone next to a severe German man who would not hear of songs in less than a year. And still she could produce but the strained, artificial sound of the vocally unendowed. It would not have been just to her intelligence to say that she had not had her moments of misgiving, but she had never yet faced the definite thought of failure.

That evening as she sat under the light of her shaded lamp reading *Walter Pater*, she decided to go the very next day to Mme. Behnke.

II

A GIRL was singing as Honora entered Mme. Behnke's studio. She had a voice that gushed out like a bird's in a flood of rich, joyous sound. Honora listened breathlessly. When it was over she exclaimed involuntarily, "What a voice!"

Mme. Behnke glanced at Honora. "Yes, she has a voice, but she has no money," she returned briefly.

"What is her name?"

"Ella Williams."

Honora looked at Ella Williams, who was rolling up her music at the other end of the studio. She was a round, pink, healthy-looking girl, cheaply dressed. She looked as if she would find her ideal of happiness at a village church "sociable." How could such a girl grasp the subtleties of Schubert or Grieg or sound the depths of Wagner!

"I, myself, have trained her," observed Mme. Behnke. "She is now ready for opera. But here she cannot get *répertoire*. She should go for a year or two to Europe, but I find no

one to send her. It is the lack of money that makes all things difficult."

Honora looked again at the girl, trying to connect her with the bird-like voice. The girl, meeting her eyes, blushed awkwardly. Inevitably Honora's mind returned to the selfish, personal point of view. If this teacher could do this for such a girl— Mme. Behnke's voice broke into her reverie:

"You wish that I shall try your voice, mees? You have something there?" she added, as Honora produced a book of Grieg's songs. She took the book from Honora's hand. "Which then shall it be?"

Honora had opened at Solvej's Song—one of the most difficultly simple songs ever written. Mme. Behnke played the accompaniment through for the first verse without comment; then she stopped. There was a moment's silence. Honora's heart was beating wildly, but she did not change color or expression as she asked:

"Well, madame, what do you think you can do for me?"

The singing-teacher wheeled sharply about on her stool and looked into the steady, serious eyes of her potential pupil. Something of their unconscious appeal may have reached out to her, but truth dwelt in the soul of the old German woman. She would not have temporized with a pupil to save herself from starvation, so she said simply and bluntly in her unserviceable English, "There is nothing to do for you, mees, for you have no voice."

The room moved about Honora and things became indistinct before her eyes. But after all these years she could not accept the brief words as final. Her mind reached out blindly for some support.

"I have been studying with someone whom I have since been led to believe injures the voice. I dare say mine is in pretty bad shape now, but I have been told—I had hoped—that you could bring back a voice even after it had been injured."

Mme. Behnke's answer seemed harsh. "If there was once a voice—

yes. But you have no voice whatever, mees. It was never there. It is hard if you so much desire to sing, for there are those who can and do not deserve or care."

III

HONORA walked home, neither seeing nor hearing, more than once narrowly escaping the wheels of truck and automobile. It was several days before she could think of anything outside of her own suffering, but at last she began to realize the cold comfort of knowing the truth—the truth that she had refused to see and that no one had forced on her all these years. As she went over it all painfully in her mind there was one thought that came and returned unbidden—that of the girl with the voice who had no money to go abroad and study for opera. She recalled her face, the rosy, cheerful, commonplace young face; a girl probably a member of some Christian Endeavor Society; a girl who would have sung hymns at weekly prayer-meetings in that heaven-born voice all her life and never known the difference, but for the accident of someone's "discovering" her. What could a voice mean to her? What a haphazard, illogical world it was!

The silvery chime of a Swiss clock on her mantel reminded her that it was time to dress for her early dinner. She was going with Robert Thorpe to "Der Fliegende Holländer," and neither of them had ever missed an overture.

Robert Thorpe was the only man that Honora saw with any degree of informality. He was a man with comfortable means of his own who did nothing with considerable grace and comfort. They had gone together to the Philharmonic and Boston Symphony concerts, and to the opera, for years. But although they enjoyed music so sympathetically together, Honora had never sung to him. She had never admitted to herself the reason. By some tacit understanding that Robert

could have better explained than Honora, the subject was seldom broached between them.

IV

"WONDERFUL little Bergmann!" exclaimed Honora as the curtain went down on the first act. She was applauding warmly. Her cheeks were faintly flushed. Her trouble had been for the time forgotten.

"There is no one like her," Robert responded enthusiastically. "She has brought the wild winds and flying clouds and sea-phantoms into this absurd suffocating place of busy tongues and expensive clothes."

"What it must be to have a voice like that!" exclaimed Honora. Then a shadow fell upon her face.

Thorpe turned and looked at her a little curiously. "How terribly you care about that, don't you? I confess I don't quite understand the way you feel about it. All I ask is to be allowed to enjoy. One is only part of it, in any case. Music is a sort of Nirvana." He met a startled look in Honora's eyes.

"I see what you mean." This was a frequent phrase of Honora's. "I have never thought of it in precisely that way." She mused a moment, then looked up with a little troubled frown. "It is all so mysterious though. Think of the women with Brunhilde souls who have no instrument, and there are so many women—I heard one the other day—with heavenly voices and no soul at all for music."

Robert shook his head. "You can never tell how those apparently soulless ones are going to turn out. Just look at dear little Bergmann, for instance——"

"Oh, but Bergmann," Honora interrupted, "she has a beautiful soul."

"Yes, yes, I know; of course one could never have called Bergmann soulless, but was she cut out in the first place for Brunhilde or Isolde or any of those other complex ladies? You know she wasn't. She was made for a

wife and mother. Yet she had the accident of the instrument and one doesn't ask to hear or see any lovelier Senta or Brunhilde. Yet can you doubt that she would have been absolutely contented without the opera-house all her life?" He turned and looked at Honora with his kind, gentlemanly eyes. "The footlights do not make happiness in any case, Honora."

"Oh, of course, it is not the footlights, but"—she hesitated—"the feeling within yourself, to know that you can express those things. It is that that must be the happiness, surely—the ability to express. It is terrible to have things to say and to be dumb."

"There is more than one way to express, for that matter," he answered, "if one must express. I dare say I am very selfish and supine. I am content to receive."

"I see what you mean," said Honora again. "I dare say you are right and my point of view is terribly egoistic. I suppose the real—the truest happiness comes from the appreciation of art. You—you always do help one to see things, Robert." For her life Honora could not have substituted *me* for *one* in that sentence.

The prelude to the second act had begun, so Robert only smiled in answer.

V

HONORA made up her mind that night, and the next morning she went again to see Mme. Behnke and asked to have Ella sing at a musical at her house the following week. She wanted to assist the girl to go abroad, she told Mme. Behnke, but she could not do it quite all herself, and she hoped by this means to interest some friends in the girl.

Mme. Behnke gave Honora one of her frank stares. "You are very good, mees," she said at last, simply, "and the money will be well spent. Ella does not waste her time like so many. She has worked well. She is not *quick*, but she takes pains. It is often more

in the end. She is now here. I shall call her."

But as the teacher arose Honora detained her. She shrank from the idea of seeing the girl just then. "No—please. You tell her for me. It might embarrass her, perhaps. And I am in a hurry this morning."

Ella came to the musical in a pink dress that fitted her plumpness tightly. Her round arms and smooth neck were bare and she looked radiantly happy. Honora was just enough to respond to the glow of that happiness. For herself she was pale and looked her age. She wore a violet gown which Robert frowningly decided was unbecoming.

Ella sang appropriately "Hark, Hark the Lark," and Brahms's "Mein Lieb ist grün"—joyous, bubbling, Spring-time melodies that belong to just such a voice as hers. At the end of the second song Robert made his way through the small appreciative crowd to Honora, his fine, scholarly face awake with enthusiasm.

"What a voice! You have made a discovery, Honora. That 'Hark, Hark, the Lark,' was a veritable outbreak of nature. It is a voice that is positively elemental—full of sunshine and flowers and April showers. I have never heard anything just like it. I thank you for a new experience. And what a happy, wholesome, charming little face it is! It just matches the voice. She is Freia—actually."

Ella, with her nursemaid cheeks and silly, incessant smiles, Freia the goddess of youth and Springtime! And this from Robert, whose discrimination she had always relied upon; Robert who always rejected the Philistine and the obvious, and inevitably responded to the subtle and difficult; Robert who always saw things as she did. Well—all men were alike in these things. Just because the girl had pink cheeks and was young! She averted her eyes quickly from his.

"I thought you would like her voice," she answered, feeling that he expected some response from her.

"I should say!" he exclaimed. She

fancied that he was surprised at her lack of enthusiasm.

A moment later he left her to return to the side of the rose-colored Ella. Honora caught a glimpse of his face as he bent over her and saw Ella's upturned, radiant with happiness at his words. She withdrew into the enclosure of the window. No, she was not sorry she had helped Ella. If Honora had a passion beyond her desire for a voice it was justice. But the temporary exaltation of the moment of sacrifice—perhaps less often a spiritual exaltation than a condition of accelerated circulation following the act of decision—was over and she saw only the long grayness of the coming years, the denuded non-significance of her own life stretching before her. And the rosy little Philistine who did not know the meaning of the art she had learned like a lesson in arithmetic to put into her beautiful voice, she had everything—even that awakened look in Robert's face that had never been there for her.

She did not see Robert again until he left, when he hurriedly reminded her that the sale of tickets for *The Ring* began the next day. Then he had devoted his attention to wrapping Ella in a flamboyant red wrap trimmed with white fur borrowed for the occasion from another pupil. The last she saw of him he was escorting the future opera queen out of her front door with what seemed to Honora an exaggeration of his characteristic deference.

VI

THE next day Honora was able to report to Mme. Behnke that she had collected a sum of money that she thought might be sufficient to send Ella to Europe.

"Ja wohl," the teacher had responded warmly. "She can do well—entirely well—with that. She shall go to a friend of mine who will teach her the German ways. She knows already a little German, and she is careful. She will not waste. Your

money is well spent, mees, believe me."

Honora smiled and flushed. "I have no doubt of that, madame."

The old German woman looked at the young American and although one who had a perhaps exaggerated sense of the value of her time and words, she was moved to make a gratuitous observation.

"The way of art is not so easy or so joyful as you perhaps may think, mees. And even success does not always bring happiness to the heart. In Germany we think that in the home is the truest happiness."

As she went down Mme. Behnke's steps Honora was thinking: "It is like what Robert said. Robert always knows." And then she looked up to see Robert himself. He saw her at the same moment and came forward with bared head and a welcoming smile.

"Why, Honora! What luck! What are you doing up in this part of the town?"

"I have just come from Mme. Behnke's studio." She flushed with a sudden consciousness of his probable thought. "I went to tell her that we had the money for Ella," she added hastily.

"Isn't it splendid?" he commented. "How fine you have been about it, Honora! Just think of the difference you have made in that girl's life."

Honora flushed again. "Oh, it is nothing," she said hurriedly. "Anyone would have done it who had the opportunity."

He shook his head. "I am not so sure about that."

"She will be a great artist," Honora concluded.

"Yes, undoubtedly she will," agreed Robert, "although she is a stupid little thing."

In the second of surprise Honora could not suppress the light that came into her face at these words. It was just at that moment that they passed the girl who had sent Honora to Mme. Behnke walking with a broad-shouldered young man with a humorous, pleasant, ugly face. The girl's eyes followed them with a whimsical smile.

"I wish to goodness those two would get married," she observed to her companion.

The man turned for a look back at Honora and Robert slowly walking down the street.

"What's the matter? Why don't they? They look prosperous and leisurely—not like us."

"That's the trouble," returned the violinist promptly. "A soul for art and enough money to live on seems to make people awfully unreal, somehow."

The man looked down at her cheerfully. "Dangerous thing, a soul, eh? Much better off without one."



A SHORT CUT

MOTHER—Bobbie, how did you get acquainted with the little boy next door?

BOBBIE—I licked him.



HIS INNOCENCE OF LITTLE VALUE

WILLIAMSON—When I was in Texas I saw a man hanged.

HENDERSON—Was he guilty?

"No, but he might as well have been."

THE WAYFARERS

By Madeline Bridges

“O H, little maid, the way is long,
And you are young, and none too strong;
For all the brightness of your eyes,
Your lips are meek, and sorrow-wise.
Your feet are slow, like pilgrim feet,
And white, with dust of field and street;
Should you not say your beads?—for lo!
Lonely and strange, the road you go.

“The sun has set, and night comes down
Between us, and the far-off town
Shall you not fear a little? You,
So young and fair may sadly rue
To be alone with none to guard,
For hearts of evil men are hard,
And beauty works such sinful charm—
Surely, you need have fear of harm?”

Her face smiled through the dimness. “Nay,
Shall we not wend the selfsame way?
Like me, you seek the town, and so,
I fear not darkness, as we go,
Nor evil men. While you are nigh
Harm cannot reach me!” . . . With a cry
He caught her hand. “Good night! I pray
God shield you, dear!” and fled away.



A COMMON MISTAKE

GILMORE—How did you begin your downward course?
DEWITTE—I began at the top, naturally. Did you think I began at the bottom?



A DULL FELLOW

THE HUSBAND—Can't we just quietly separate, Gertrude, and thus avoid publicity?
THE WIFE—Quietly? What do you suppose I married you for, stupid?

THE KING'S JESTER

By J. J. Bell

“A PRETTY tale, but a doleful,” remarked the King, when the Jester had ended speaking. The King took a draught of red wine from a golden goblet, and certain of his courtiers followed his example, while several ladies wiped their eyes.

The Jester bowed to the King as a servitor, bidden by his Majesty, presented a cup of wine. He tasted the wine, bowed again, and set the cup by his side on the mat where he squatted, his knees drawn up. He clasped his arms about his shins and, interlocking his fingers, waited for the King to speak again.

His Majesty, being for the moment blessed with tranquil subjects and friendly neighbors, was in a genial mood. With a kindly wave of his hand in the direction of the still dewy-eyed ladies, among whom was his own fair young daughter, he said lightly to the Jester:

“Behold what thou hast done! I pay thee to bring laughter, and thou bringest tears. What hast thou to say?”

“Sire,” returned the Jester, “thou knowest that I am grateful for thy gold so generously bestowed in return for my poor wit. Is it more than thou canst pardon that these noble ladies should bestow their brightest jewels upon me?”

“Good!” cried the King. “A philosopher did once assure me that the veriest buffoon is at heart a tragedian, living on laughter and longing for tears.”

“A wise and true philosopher, sire,” the Jester said gravely. “Yet the Jester has his happy hours,” he added,

with so quaint a look that the King’s chamberlain and others laughed. Never was such a well-paid Jester in their experience.

The King’s daughter turned her glorious dark blue eyes upon the thin, motley-clad figure squatting before the dais. She was curious, in an almost tender fashion, about the man whose bright eyes rarely sought the ground, and whose clean-cut, shaven features seldom expressed emotion of any kind.

Since he had succeeded the old Jester, who had died somewhat suddenly two years before through mis-swallowing a dagger—having rashly added juggling to his jesting—the Princess had often watched him and wondered about him while he amused the court of an evening. But she had puzzled in vain. The secret sorrow which, she had been convinced almost from the beginning, existed beneath the stream of humor with its froth of pure fun, remained secret, and the Princess in her sentimental soul waxed pitiful and provoked by turns.

But tonight the Jester’s tale which had brought tears to her eyes had also shed a certain illumination upon the thing that so long had baffled her woman’s wit. For the Jester, beginning gaily enough, had soon caught and held all ears with a tale which anon grew doleful—a tale of a youth of mean estate who pined and died for the love of a lady of high degree. An oft-told tale, doubtless, a tale as old as the world, mayhap. But the tale is in the telling—and how the Jester told it! “Ah, me! how he told it!” thought the Princess, as she regarded him from

her high place. And she felt that her soul had half-read his secret.

She bent toward the Jester.

"Thy mournful tale did surely have a ring of truth," she said gently. "Can it be true?"

The Jester raised his eyes for a moment, and dropped them. For once his impassive face seemed to betray feelings hitherto concealed. But his reply came respectfully and calmly:

"An thou believest it, Princess, the tale is true."

"A pretty answer, in sooth!" exclaimed the ladies with one accord, and there were those about the King who clapped their hands, for the Jester had few enemies. With his sharp tongue he had pricked many but poisoned none.

"A prettier answer than thou didst deserve, my forward daughter," quoth the King, patting her cheek.

The Princess blushed, she knew not why, and turned away her head.

The Jester heaved an amazing sigh, and the court physician inquired jocularly whether or no death by pining were painful. The Princess looked annoyed at the question, but the Jester replied quietly:

"Nay, learned sir, being still alive I cannot tell thee. Nevertheless, methinks 'tis an easy and perchance pleasant passage from a naughty world—the most easy and most pleasant of all deaths save sudden death."

"How can the slow sickness of love—if such a sickness there be—have aught of ease and pleasance?" the physician demanded.

"In that it is the only sickness for which the most learned leeches can do naught."

"Aha!" cried the King, in high good humor, while the physician took the laugh against him as best he could. "'Tis a bolus for my bolus-maker!" And he tossed a great gold-piece toward his Jester.

Nimble the latter caught between finger and thumb the coin as it fell, and with a bow to his lord dropped it into his pouch. Then, lest the court should grow weary of chatter, he picked up the

small stringed instrument lying by his side, and softly plucked a chord that sounded like a question, glancing as he did so toward the dais.

The King nodded, and the Jester broke into a merry ditty, with a laughing refrain. The Jester's was a queer little laugh, dry, almost ironical, and it saddened the Princess near as much as his tale of dole. If the tale were true, the laugh was not; indeed, it seemed the laugh of a blighted heart. And, oh, the pity of it! thought the King's daughter, that one still young should be suffering with a song on his lips, enduring while he jested.

When the song was ended the ladies rose to retire, and it so happened that in their progress from the hall they must needs pass the Jester, who according to his custom remained sitting on the floor, twanging a simple tune in lazy marching time. Some of the dames were wont to pass him haughtily, others to nod kindly or say pleasant things about his entertainment. A little behind the Queen, who walked with certain noble guests, came the Princess with her ladies-in-waiting, and as she approached him she met the eyes of the Jester.

Her heart seemed to miss a beat. In a twinkling she read the whole of his sad secret. Alas and alas! Poor Jester who loved a King's daughter! Her young bosom swelled with sweet pity. Slipping a jewel from her slender wrist she dropped it as she passed him, and hastened onward with downcast eyes and fluttering heart.

For a moment the music broke off, then it began again, and the Princess imagined a something hopeful in the rhythm. And long time she lay awake that night remembering the many old tales she had heard of the loves of lowly youth and high-born maidens, and wishing that even one of them had had a happy ending.

On the following afternoon word was brought to the palace that the Jester was sick and craved the royal leniency for one evening only.

The King was pleased to be lenient, and sent the messenger back with a

comfortable assurance. "If all my knights and retainers," remarked his Majesty, "failed me as seldom as my Jester, my crown had never made my head ache. Command the musicians in ordinary for tonight."

The Princess did not appear in the great hall that evening. "She is weary after the hawking this morn, and would rest," the Queen explained.

But as soon as it was dark the Princess, wrapped in a dark cloak and accompanied by a trusty serving-woman, crept to the postern gate.

"The Princess!" gasped the astonished sentry.

"Hush! Be secret for thy life." She placed money in his hand. "We would know where dwells the King's Jester."

It appeared that the Jester when not lodging at court dwelt but a short distance beyond the castle walls, and the serving-woman undertook to guide her mistress thither. So, after telling the sentry to expect their return ere long, and once more admonishing him to secrecy, the twain went forth into the night.

"Yonder is the hovel," said the woman, pointing to where a faint light glimmered in the darkness.

"A poor place, alack!" sighed the Princess. "Go warily," she added. "I would peep ere we enter."

In her gentle mind's eye she saw the Jester drooping over a miserable fire, solitary and sorrowful and heart-sick.

They approached the little window, the shutters of which had been but carelessly closed.

"Odsbodikins!" whispered the serving-woman, "but I smell the smell of stewing cheese."

"Peace!" hissed the Princess, and the woman quaked in silence.

The King's daughter peeped into the humble home of the King's Jester, and her eyes grew big. Her hand leapt to her heart.

The light was poor, but for her purpose bright enough. Her soul flamed with anger.

Over a fire on the open hearth a

buxom woman, her comely face beaming with heat and smiles, was bending, holding a pan from which doubtless the savory odor, detected by the serving-woman, was rising. Tied to one of her sturdy wrists with a thin leathern thong was the jewel which the Princess had dropped the previous night. A little boy blew the fire and gazed at the jewel at the same time.

On a rude table were set a number of wooden platters and a heap of roughly baked cakes. Upon a platter at one end of the table lay a large gold-piece, perchance a surprise for the good-wife.

And on a rickety bench sat the King's Jester, a babe on each knee; and behind him, stroking his hair, stood a little girl, aged, perhaps, seven years.

And the Jester's face was aglow with happiness as he dandled his babes; and presently he burst out in a rousing nursery ditty, and ended the same with a roar of hearty laughter. He reached forward and slapped his wife on her broad back, and she turned and slapped his face; and then she kissed him right generously to the imminent danger of the babes, not to make mention of the melting cheese.

The Princess turned from the little window. "Come," she said briefly.

"What shall be the punishment for the varlet?" asked the serving-woman as they drew near the postern.

"Of whom speakest thou?" said the Princess quietly, for now all her anger had gone. Nay, it had gone ere she left the little window.

"Of the King's Jester, O Princess," replied the woman in great astonishment.

Then to the woman's greater astonishment the Princess drew from her a solemn oath of secrecy and silence regarding all that had passed.

And in the dark the beautiful eyes of the King's daughter filled.

"What happiness," she said in her gentle heart, "what happiness have I seen this night!"

So the Jester went unpunished for his most profitable, if not his merriest, jest.

REVERDY'S WIFE

By Irene Fowler Brown

I WONDERED then why Reverdy married her. I continued to wonder in a desultory way during the ten years they were abroad.

Not that she was inferior to him. In the fine inner qualities I know she was far his superior. But I should have thought that Reverdy, with his money, his experience, his epicurean taste, would have chosen someone with the more obvious and conspicuous graces. She was hardly pretty. As I recall her she was a slim, quiet thing with soft hair and serious gray eyes. The other girls that we invited over at times from the village were rosy, healthy, flirtatious misses—albeit a little touched with gaucherie. But Hilda lacked the very qualities of pink-cheeked vivacity and sauciness that make a country girl attractive to people skilled in delicate evasions, in ellipses and allusions. She rarely talked to the guests. Usually I found her in some retired corner adjusting a lamp-shade, finding somebody's music, putting a bowl of flowers in place, unobtrusive, sweet, somewhat shy, but never awkward, never in the way. Our friends were lovely to her when they noticed her—but they seldom noticed her. At least not until Reverdy came.

He went mad over her. I had known him in half-a-dozen cities and as many Summer resorts, and had seen him make love to a score of women—women beautiful or exclusive or renowned as the case might be—and I knew when he pretended. He was not pretending now. He pulled her out of quiet corners; he talked with her, rode with her. He would not let

her out of his sight. I was not surprised at her; she might easily be fascinated by such a man. But that he, so fastidious in the matter of externals, should have fancied a shy girl in a home-made white frock—I confess I wondered at him. Had I underestimated him? Was he capable of a moral fastidiousness for which I had never given him credit?

Perhaps in other ways he was capable of more than I had given him credit for. Superficially it would seem easy to dispose of him. I counted him merely one of the fortunates—or unfortunates—who had fallen upon the too pleasant things of life. Too much money, too much leisure, too much spoiling, a handsome face, a charming manner, and a record that might be expected from such a man—these comprised the Reverdy I knew. He struck me as largely a potentiality. I saw what he might be in ten or twenty years and the sight was not pretty. He was thirty now, easy, dominant, delightful, going readily with the current. At fifty, if present signs counted, he would be gross, debauched, his soul sunk into the encompassing flesh. And yet—in rare flashes one divined another potentiality—a Reverdy of high lights and inspired moments, presaging a full and glorious manhood. But the lights, I surmised, would fade and the inspiration die; in the padded comfort of the life he lived I could not doubt which potentiality would become actual.

Well, he married Hilda, quietly, conventionally enough in the little country church. Her downright old father, when Reverdy went to him, looked him

up and down, told him a few facts about his life, past, present and future, and said no. But in the end Reverdy got what he wanted; he usually did. Still, he started square—I will do him that justice. I am told that he ruthlessly laid bare to the girl every soiled and crumpled page of his life (and there were some of them—God forgive him—not fit for a woman's reading), sparing nothing, extenuating nothing; and she married him. Yet none of us, I am sure, did her the injustice of supposing that she married him for his money.

Then they went abroad.

At first we had a letter or two from Hilda—it was all such a beautiful new earth she was seeing—but these ceased. After that we heard only indirectly, chiefly through friends who ran across them in their travels. Morton saw something of them in Paris, I believe; others met them elsewhere. They all had a good deal to tell of Reverdy, and the tales were not savory. He had tested every known amusement, it seems, and there was scarcely a spot where living was fast or high that could not contribute something to his questionable reputation. Of Hilda they appeared to know little; and in the course of time they both drifted somewhat out of our lives.

And just when we had all but forgotten them, they came back. Naturally we had them with us for a while.

If I had spent ten years in wondering why Reverdy married her, I was now to wonder why she had married him. At thirty one's character may be potential; at forty it is usually fixed. If ten years before I had seen two Reverdys, I saw only one now. The Reverdy of high lights and inspired moments was gone. This was a Reverdy lax of jaw, red of cheek, puffy of eyelid, given to anxiety over the baking of a duck or the mixing of a cocktail. Judging by what his face told, the stories I had heard were likely true. The only decent trait left was his feeling for his wife; she was at once the anchor that he held to and the saint

that he adored. He was bad enough, yet God knows what he would have been without her. For he worshiped her.

As for her, his faith in her was justified. She was the most exquisite thing I ever saw. The word is abused, but I have gone through the list and there is no other to express her. I do not know if she was beautiful; perhaps not. As I remember, there were touches of gray in the soft hair at her temples, and lines in the delicate whiteness of her face. But these things did not seem to matter. She was a creature rare and fine and perfect: I cannot, by the mere telling, make one see her—her graciousness, her dignity, the exquisite fineness of her. She was thoroughbred, exquisite (I go back to my word) in mind and body, exquisite from the trailing soft gowns to the beautiful soul that looked out from her quiet eyes. She was in the world, but apart from it: a star poised where the rest of us could not climb; a white lily that had grown unsmirched out of the mire of his life.

"There is nothing like her," said Morton, "and she is tied to that beast. If she only had a child! That might compensate. But she is denied even that solace."

I doubted that on the untroubled heights where her spirit dwelt she needed compensation. She had had a child years before (it had died at birth, I believe), and her face bore etched into it the indefinable look that motherhood brings; but I never thought of her as essentially a mother. All the unused maternal love was poured upon her husband with a fulness that must have shamed him. She was above all things Reverdy's wife. How she had lived with him and become what she was I could not understand. I searched her face for the suffering that such a husband must have brought to such a wife, but it was not there: the grave sweetness of her look was not that of a broken-hearted woman. Marriage either makes or mars a woman, I have been told. Every opportunity to be marred had been hers, yet in

some marvelous fashion she had come out unscathed from the apparent wreckage of her life.

The days she spent with us who had known her before her marriage must have been difficult. If they were she did not show it. Again I did not understand. She was intelligent; she could have no illusions left where Reverdy was concerned; yet no word of hers indicated disappointment or regret. She did not offer the impregnable front of indifference; she did not scorn him as she had every right to do; she did not acknowledge his debasement by either defense or apology; and she was not deluded into blindness as a less clear-minded woman might have been. It was as if she had penetrated the clogging flesh and saw with the eyes of the spirit the Reverdy that was lost to us. Had she, indeed, the finer vision? Had the keenest of all insights enabled her to see beyond the coarse and degraded husk to the struggling soul holden from our baser sight?

And he struggled before he went down: this much I accord him. When he wavered before some allurements of the flesh we could see the feeble battle of ill-matched forces. It was a foregone conclusion which way he would go, but the struggle was to his credit—or hers. That much she had done for him. I recall a certain day on the terraced ground above the lake. They were sitting in a sort of Summer-house—an affair partly sheltered by vines, but unroofed—and I could see them from the walk above. Hilda was in a garden-chair, Reverdy on the grass beside her, his head against her knee. A voice reached me—I could not believe it Reverdy's, such an agony of love and pain and remorse as it held.

"God forgive me for the hurts I cause you. I wonder why you don't leave me. God knows, too, you have had provocation enough—a thousand times too much. Throw me over now. I can never blame you. You have done your best."

I did not hear what she said; I did not wish to hear. But I saw her hand

—a slender, ringed hand—go out to his bowed head, and I saw the exquisite look on her face as she bent above him. No, the Reverdy that had broken out in youthful flashes was not quite dead; but he was dying. And only one person could enter the darkened room where the mangled spirit lay.

But these moments were for him and for her. The Reverdy of every day was as much as ever an object of my contempt. For a wife like that a man ought to have scourged himself with knotted ropes, or walked over red-hot plowshares. I was glad their visit was reaching its end. I was near hating him.

Then the accident occurred.

It seemed to me without adequate excuse in a system of justice—one of fate's irretrievable blunders. She had gone out in the afternoon, calling, I think, and the motor had suddenly grown unmanageable. It had run into the stone pier of the gate and she was killed instantly. Vapid Amy Ferris, who was with her and whose life was not a farthing's value to anyone, was untouched, and the chauffeur escaped with a broken finger. . . . They took her upstairs—a shattered flower; and below we met in hushed groups, questioning. Who would tell Reverdy?

Morton ground out an oath. "Good God! Have you seen him?"

I looked a question.

"Of course. He usually is. God! Couldn't he have kept sober for this once? Think of desecrating *her* death with the maudlin tears of a drunken man!"

Well, we got him told somehow—I forget who did it. Not I. He was in the billiard-room flushed and excited, and they said it was some minutes before he understood. . . . I waited. . . . Reverdy without anchorage! Again I cursed fate for its irreparable blunder. . . . At last I heard the key turn in the door of the room where she lay.

We hung about in little groups on the veranda. . . . An hour went by . . . two. . . . There was

November, 1906—9

no sound upstairs. We began to grow restless.

"You had better go in," said Ruth.

"But the door— You heard——"

"I know. Take your skeleton-key. Break it down—anything." She said no more, nor I; but I knew what she feared. What if drink, the sudden shock, the loss of his one moral support, had proved too much? He was weak. What if—? . . . I went up the stairs, Morton with me.

I turned the key and we stepped inside.

Reverdy was standing facing the door, his head up, his hand on the dead woman's breast. There was no trace of maudlin grief here. His face was pale, his mouth grave and set, his eyes steady but inscrutable.

"Come in," he said quietly. "I was just ready to go. I apologize for having been so long." He withdrew his hand, crossed the floor with composed and deliberate step, and went from the room without a look behind. We did not speak. Almost it seemed

as if he had come into his tardy manhood.

That was ten years ago. He had surprised me years before by his marriage. He has continued to surprise me. If I saw in him once the potentialities of two men, I have since seen those potentialities made actual. A decade ago he was the Reverdy of swineherds—a creature I do not like to remember; to-day he is a man whose bare acquaintance is deemed an honor. What happened in that closed room I do not know. What his battle may have been I can only guess. Perhaps he fought it out alone; perhaps in some inexplicable way her spirit found his and upheld it. This, too, is only conjecture; he has never mentioned his wife. I only know that all a woman could want a man to be he has become. This is the man she saw; this the man she believed in; this the soul that lay with broken wings in the darkness where only her hand could reach. He has redeemed his manhood. More, he has magnificently justified her faith.



A CURSE

By Martha G. D. Bianchi

OUT of the East nor West
 No tender-eyed shall come
 To love thee first or best,
 Or strike old echoes dumb.
 Out of the North nor South
 Passion nor pain nor joy
 Shall lay to thy lips the waking mouth
 That made thee man from boy.
 Body and spirit first-love bereft,
 Whole thou shalt never be;
 Heaven itself shall take what I left—
 Branded with love of me!

L'ATTENTE

Par J.-H. Rosny

LE sentiment de l'attente est un de ceux qui causent le plus de souffrance. La raison en est sans doute que nous aimons vivre, sentir notre vie, et que l'attente tient suspendues toutes les forces de notre être. On n'ose s'arrêter à rien. On n'existe pas dans le présent, et le futur nous apparaît dans un chaos. J'imagine le supplice des pauvres gens condamnés à l'attente, après une catastrophe comme celle de Courrières! J'ai connu un supplice analogue, et il dura plusieurs années.

Quand j'étais seule chez ma mère, dans notre humble petit appartement de la rue de Babylone, tous les soirs, à la même heure, j'écartais légèrement le rideau et je regardais passer un officier d'infanterie. Ma mère, avec la grâce d'état des parents, ne se doutait de rien. J'avais dix-huit ans; ce n'est pas l'âge où l'on se confie. Le Père Dominicain Service, qui fréquentait encore notre maison, quoique nous fussions ruinés, ne manquait jamais de dire, dès qu'il m'apercevait :

— Quand marions-nous cette jolie fille?

— Elle n'est ni jolie ni bonne à marier, répliquait ma mère.

L'esprit qui nous vient si naturellement m'assurait le contraire. Et quand le lieutenant X... s'était mis obstinément à passer chaque soir devant ma fenêtre, j'avais tout de suite compris que lui non plus ne partageait pas l'opinion de ma mère. Rien de plus charmant, d'ailleurs, que la cour de ce militaire. On eût dit une jeune fille, à le voir si simple, si modeste d'attitude. Il tournait vers moi son oeil bleu tendre et affectueux; un éclair de

joie y passait à ma vue, et l'homme s'éloignait, avec une timidité exquise, craignant de me compromettre, ne se retournant jamais.

Je ne connaissais pas son nom, et cependant je l'aimais. La chose n'est pas si mystérieuse qu'elle en a l'air. N'y a-t-il pas, en effet, bien d'autres manières de connaître les gens que de s'en tenir à leur état civil ou aux renseignements des agences matrimoniales? Nous nous voyions tous les jours, dans la liberté de nos êtres. On ne pouvait douter, à la manière dont il levait les yeux, qu'il ne fût la franchise et la loyauté mêmes, et que son amour pour moi était dépourvu de calcul; mais cela ressortait plus clairement encore de ce que les avocats appelleraient les circonstances de la cause. J'étais pauvre, sans espérance; la seule séduction que j'offrais était en moi, et un Don Juan n'eût pas hésité à faire tout son possible pour obtenir gratuitement mes faveurs. Il n'aurait pas été difficile de me faire parvenir un billet: ma mère ne me gardait guère. Il m'arrivait de sortir seule: quelle aubaine pour Don Juan! Même, dans la petite chapelle où j'allais aux vêpres, un homme hardi pouvait me parler à l'oreille. Lui n'en fit rien.

Vous allez peut-être rire, car les préjugés sur la nécessaire impudence du mâle ont ridiculisé le refus de Joseph à Mme Putiphar, mais je pense que mon bel officier, si je lui avais fourni l'occasion de me parler, aurait fui cette occasion. Non seulement il ne voulait pas me compromettre, mais, avant d'être sûr que je serais sa femme, il prétendait se contenter de l'humble indication de sa présence, de sa candidature

amoureuse. Il disait: "Je suis là, j'attends; si vous m'aimez, vous m'attendrez aussi; je ne serai heureux que si je vous obtiens ainsi de vous-même, sans aucune contrainte."

Toutes ces paroles, non dites, volaient dans l'air; nous seuls les entendions. Les plus grands serments ne nous eussent pas mieux attachés l'un à l'autre. Toute la journée, je vivais sur le souvenir de notre entrevue du soir précédent et sur l'espoir de l'entrevue prochaine.

Ma mère finit par s'étonner de me voir, à dix-huit ans, aussi sage qu'une petite mariée; elle en parla au Père Service, qui lui conseilla vivement de me mener dans le monde. Je n'y allais pas sans plaisir. La toilette, le bal, me plaisaient comme à toutes les jeunes filles; mais j'y apportais l'âme éprise et innocente d'une fiancée. Le regard des hommes me laissait froide. Ils n'en furent que plus ardents à me faire la cour. Ce devint presque une gageure. Le fils d'un architecte richissime demanda ma main. C'était tellement imprévu et inespéré que ma mère en pâlit de joie. J'eus bien de la peine à lui faire comprendre que je n'aimais pas ce jeune homme, que je ne pouvais l'épouser. Le Père Service me sermonna pendant deux heures, s'efforçant de m'enseigner la résignation, l'abnégation et tant d'autres vertus chrétiennes que l'amour tenait chez moi en échec. Je l'écoutai patiemment. C'était un vieux routier du cœur humain: il en connaissait les plus secrets détours. J'eus de la peine à ne pas me trahir dans l'interrogatoire, coupé de reproches et d'objurgations, auquel il me soumit. Bon Père Service, quelles réflexions vous avez dû faire sur la malice des filles! Je n'en connus que le résultat, la surveillance active de ma mère. Elle ne découvrit rien. Alors, elle crut bon de ne plus jamais me laisser sortir seule, de m'accompagner chez mes amies, dans les magasins, à l'église.

Au bout de six mois, nous étions toujours au même point. Le fils de l'architecte renouvela sa demande; un jeune notaire se mit sur les rangs. Il

parut monstrueux qu'une fille pauvre refusât deux jeunes millionnaires. Le Père Service en était désespéré. Il crut à une vocation religieuse et me proposa d'entrer dans un ordre contemplatif. Je m'y refusai avec horreur. Une colère le prit: il conseilla à ma mère de m'envoyer à Avignon, chez deux vieilles tantes qui vivaient là une existence cloîtrée. La chose se fit comme un enlèvement. Prévenue la veille au soir, le matin je prenais le rapide; mais j'avais eu le temps, dans ma manière de soulever le rideau et dans le regard que j'échangeai avec mon amoureux, de lui marquer qu'un événement important prenait place dans notre vie.

Je restai trois mois chez mes tantes. Elles écrivirent à ma mère des lettres enthousiastes sur la façon édifiante dont je comprenais mes devoirs. Mon amour, en effet, me donnait une sainteté. N'étais-je pas au-dessus des orgueils et des agitations, sûre de moi, me réservant toute à celui que j'aimais? Les pauvres vieilles, dont je charmais la solitude, eurent de la peine à me laisser partir. Ce fut tout le résultat de ma mise en retraite. Quand je revins à Paris, le fils de l'architecte et le notaire se virent définitivement relégués.

Je retrouvais ma chère fenêtre et, dès le soir, la silhouette craintive. Nos yeux se dirent toute la joie que nous éprouvions et notre tranquille confiance. Une plus dure épreuve nous attendait.

C'était vers le temps de la guerre de Chine. Peu occupée de politique, cet événement, comme tant d'autres, me laissait indifférente, quand, soudain, je crus remarquer un léger trouble sur le visage de l'officier. Un jour même, lui, si timide, eut un geste que je ne pus comprendre. Le lendemain, il ne parut point. Je n'en aurais nullement été inquiète, car déjà plusieurs fois il avait ainsi disparu pendant des semaines; mais je songeai à la tristesse de ses yeux et de ses lèvres, et je ne pus dormir. Le lendemain, nous reçûmes un journal à mon adresse. Ma mère en déchira la bande et le parcourut d'un regard sévère. Elle n'y trouva rien. Pour

plus de sûreté, elle feignit d'oublier de me le remettre; elle le jeta au feu.

Je n'avais pas besoin de lire ce journal pour savoir ce qu'il annonçait, car je le retrouvai, une heure plus tard, dans notre feuille quotidienne: on y voyait une longue liste des officiers qui portaient pour la Chine. Parmi tous ces noms, quel était le sien? Pour la première fois, je sentis l'âpre curiosité me mordre aux entrailles!

Ah! je les ai vécus ensuite, les longs mois de cette guerre. J'appris la mort de plusieurs lieutenants, le déplacement de certains autres. Et cependant, chaque soir, j'écartais le rideau de mousseline; je le laissais retomber, le cœur défaillant. Longtemps, je demeurai calme, certaine de son retour; puis la guerre ayant pris fin, mon attente devint intolérable.

Les années s'ajoutèrent aux années. J'avais vingt-deux ans; j'étais si pâle, si triste, que les médecins conseillèrent de me faire voyager. Je passai quelques semaines en Suisse; j'en revins, lasse et chagrine, comme j'étais partie.

Je ne prenais qu'une seule distraction, c'était de regarder passer les gens dans la rue. Ma mère, qui s'en aperçut, se mit à chercher un appartement dans une rue plus populeuse, et, un soir, elle m'annonça qu'elle avait trouvé. Ah! mon désespoir! Moi, si tranquille d'ordinaire, je me mis en fureur; je refusai catégoriquement de partir. Ma mère céda, en me suppliant de lui dire ce qui me mettait dans l'affreux état où elle me voyait. Je sentais l'inutilité de toutes paroles: je me tus. Mais l'attente rongait ma vie.

Alors, le Père Service me proposa une

seconde fois d'entrer dans un ordre contemplatif. Pour toute réponse, je lui montrai la rue et les passants.

— Mais, ma pauvre enfant, ce n'est pas raisonnable.

Jamais mot ne fut plus juste, car quelle chose est plus opposée à la raison que l'amour? Je me reprochais quelquefois mon absurde confiance et je ne pouvais la retirer de mon cœur. L'attente, en se prolongeant, avait fini par faire partie de moi-même, ainsi qu'une longue habitude, une habitude qui me livrait à la mort. Vers le mois d'avril de l'année dernière, ma santé déclina encore. J'eus la fièvre tous les soirs, à l'heure où je soulevais jadis mon rideau pour le voir passer. Le médecin voulut me renvoyer dans la montagne; je déclarai que je ne partirais pas. Quelques jours funèbres passèrent. Je dus rester au lit; mais, à l'heure du crépuscule, je me levais, je m'habillais avec soin, je me glissais vers la croisée.

Un soir, je me trouvais là, quand on sonna à la porte. Je n'y pris pas garde. Ma mère, appelée par la bonne, eut, avec un visiteur, une longue conversation; puis elle rentra.

— Geneviève, dit-elle en pleurant, ton temps d'épreuve est fini; pourquoi t'es-tu cachée de moi?

Je demeurai toute saisie, ne sachant que répondre, quand la porte s'ouvrit; la haute silhouette d'un capitaine d'infanterie se dressa devant moi et, tout à coup, j'eus à mes pieds mon cher amour — la guérison, la vie, le bonheur.

— J'étais sûr que vous m'attendriez, dit-il.

— J'étais sûre que vous viendriez, murmurai-je.

Et je m'évanouis dans ses bras.



FAR BEYOND HIM

SHE—You will please to remember, Mr. Gibbons, that I don't have to marry you.

HE—I'm not so sure about that. Your parents oppose the match, you know, and so do mine. If you can see any honorable way out of it, you are cleverer than I.

A VOYAGE OF DISCOVERY

By Amos DeLany

JANE MANTON leaned over the side of the fruit-ship and gazed absently at the cluttered pier glaring bright under a dozen arc-lights and swarming with black men who sang gibberish with entrancing melody and contrived to be each in the way of all the others.

A string of freight cars whose burden of bananas had been that afternoon passed into the *Barnard's* hold bumped jerkily and with a rustle of gathering speed out from under the roof of corrugated iron and over the trestle toward Limon. A fat white man, clothed in soiled duck garments, mounted a pile of sacks and shouted names from a time-book, to a crowd of laborers which thinned as he read, each man departing, his umbrella under his arm, as he was assured that his day's work had been noted and placed to his credit. The band of singers hurried about more desperately as the moments passed, clearing the pier of the loading machines, the rope's-ends, the scraps of burlap, and dividing at length into groups at the bow and stern of the vessel and at her gang-plank, while they struck up a West Indian chant hoary with age:

"I say, brotheh, you cain't go yet!
Yah-yah, yah!
When the mo'nin'-sta' rise, we put you in a
hole!
Yah-yah, yah!
Then you go in-a Africa; you see fetich therel
Yah-yah, yah!
Buccra cain't come, say, 'Damn rascal, why
you no work?'
Yah-yah, yah!"

They were silent for a space, breaking into a new ditty as the *Barnard's*

hoarse whistle made the steel decks vibrate. The girl covered her ears with her hands, and turned as if to retreat to the open state-room behind her. A gust of air, sweeping around the deckhouse, caught a stray lock of her hair and twisted it before her eyes. She faced about impatiently and saw that there was already a widening strip of black water, streaked with flickering paths of light, between the ship's side and the wharf, while the dancing, ragged blacks, with their swelling voices chorded, were shrinking gently in size as they slipped away. From deep in the *Barnard's* vitals sounded a tinkling bell; presently there was a sighing heave of the decks and a soft trembling of the latches on the state-room doors as the screw began its eight-day whirl. The pier, its brilliant light framed about by an expanse of blackness and presenting the image of a stage set for the title scene of a melodrama, fell to the rear, and with a few more throbs was gone, while the fresh wind and the rushing waters drowned the last echoes from shore.

Dimly, far beyond the few ranks of waves which the vessel's lights could reveal, the girl saw a mass of grayish-white, intermittently distinguishable from the darkness. She pointed it out to the man at her side.

"What is it, Mr. Allis?" she asked.

"That's the reef," he answered. "Don't you see the light beyond? No; over there. You noticed the red-and-white lighthouse, like a pagoda, on the *isleta*, perhaps, while you were at anchor last week."

"Perhaps," she said rather petu-

lantly. "But I am not sure. Oh! isn't it all depressing! Another day of it would kill me. I couldn't stand it to be among these—these heathen. No, that's not the word. Their religion doesn't trouble me. But—but—what shall I say? Don't you know what I mean? It doesn't seem possible that real human beings can live in such an abominable place. I should think they would turn into parrots or monkeys."

"I've lived there for some time," observed Allis.

"I can't see how you survived," she said. "Weren't you simply eaten up with homesickness? I thought today when we were shooting over those terrible gorges and cañons that if I could be spared to get back to Durham street and the marble church, I'd never leave home again. Only papa—and I suppose, indeed I hope, he won't have to make another journey soon."

"Don't you know," inquired Allis amusedly, "that Thomas Francis Meagher declared that those same gorges and mountains were——"

"I don't care!" exclaimed the girl, smiling. "I'd rather stare at the shop-windows in State street. And the towns—I can never forget those shanties. I shall have nightmares about them!"

Allis shrugged his shoulders ever so slightly and said nothing. He was past his slender youth, and the flesh of the early thirties already threatened him, but his clear eyes and his unwrinkled face, continually alive with hearty interest in everything about him, were not growing old. For twelve years he had drifted from one end of the world to another, remaining in few places longer than was necessary to acquaint himself with their oddities of speech and custom, and careless of the doings of that vast majority with whom wisdom will doubtless perish. As with Adrian Harley, the dream of travel was to him as the love of woman to other young men, but, unlike that discreet youth, Allis, early an orphan, had been suf-

ficiently enamoured of his mistress to woo her at the expense of discomfort, and to set up housekeeping in a box-car since he could not bring the shy creature home. To the scandal of the sleepy little city of his boyhood, he had left college to see the world; and he had set forth in the true spirit of adventure, penniless, and with no encumbering equipage of sumpter-mules—not even a squire to carry his shield. He had returned but once, on his twenty-fifth birthday, when he came into the modest fortune bequeathed to him by his mother. Thereafter he lived at better hotels and traveled first-class.

Though he paid due regard in all the outwardnesses to the claims of conventionality, he was, in his love of the highway, a vagabond. It was the wine of existence to him to find himself in a place where he had never before been, and to be able to say that if he liked it he would never leave it, and if he liked it not, he would stay no longer than to discover the quickest way out. He liked also to be where other travelers were not, which had been his excuse for dallying at Limon while two ships of one line and one of another had sailed without him. He had been six months in odd corners of Nicaragua and Costa Rica, dodging tourists at every turn, and if he could be the only passenger on the vessel which carried him northward, he was willing to wait. So it was that when he stepped from his room to the promenade deck of the *Barnard* at twilight on the eve of sailing he was annoyed to see the steward escorting to rooms in the deckhouse under the bridge a stout, white-whiskered man and a young woman. Later, when the captain, a grave, courteous German, introduced the passengers to each other in the saloon, Allis remembered the broad-shouldered old fellow as Cassius Manton, a citizen of the town of his youth, unchanged by the years and yet engaged in a querulous warfare with his alimentary canal. Their former acquaintance was shortly reestablished, with the aid of the steward

and his glassware, so firmly that the whiskered Cassius, his memory tricking him, confided his daughter Jane to the care of her old "playmate," and retired to his room with a ponderously jocular request not to be disturbed until Boston Light was abeam.

Allis, so suddenly made into a playmate of the charming young woman who sat opposite him, was a little disconcerted. Miss Jane, as he remembered her—a spindling, toothy nine-year-old, with dresses buttoned behind and a Chautauqua bang—was not to be recognized in the actual Miss Jane. It was a tremendous compliment to her beauty that he, so many years engrossed in his own comfort, thought of her limpid, pensive gray eyes and her daintily wide mouth, telling of generous impulses, before he turned to the possible annoyances of her company on a voyage of eight days. To be sure, the captain's wife was there, a silent little novel-weary woman, but that would not relieve him altogether. He must not permit the playmate thrust upon him to be lonesome; yet he knew so very little of the machinery of a girl's thoughts that he was by no means sure of his ground, and as a prudent man of the world, he was chary of exposing himself to the chance of being caught napping—a thing, he felt, he could never forgive himself.

But his unintimacy with women had left him sufficiently unscathed to be innocent of the compelling desire of the more weatherwise to seek cover in beauty's presence. "After all, she's too pretty to run away from," he said, in no way deeming the whole battle therein fought and lost. So he went with her to the upper deck, where they watched the hustling confusion of the moment of sailing, and where he learned that this young person with the clear gray eyes and the adorable lips of a pursuer of ideals, was so saturated with the narrow, provincial atmosphere of the moribund little city from which he had fled in her pinafore days, that Nature had

for her no charms which State street could not surpass; that the dome of the Mutual Building was grander in her eyes than the peaks of Irasu or Turalba, and that midnight fudge or a surreptitious rabbit in the dormitory at the seminary, spoke louder to her soul than the marvelous dash down tropic mountain-sides on the narrow-gauge line from San José. Allis did not hold these esthetic delights to be the chief things of life, yet it seemed proper to him that a beautiful woman should find joy in them, and her contrariety puzzled him.

Well out to sea by this time, and heading a half-point east of due north, the *Barnard* was encountering a heavy swell. She met the elusive, crested hummocks easily, the weight of the forty thousand bunches of bananas in her hold keeping her screw submerged so that she plowed smoothly on with small waste of energy in her tossing. The gentle, snoring purr of the buried engines and the swish of waters thrust aside by her forefoot told of twelve knots an hour being twisted out of her bulky frame on the straightaway dash for the Straits of Yucatan.

Miss Jane and Allis, in the lee of the superstructure under the bridge, could distinguish but dimly the limits of their narrow world. At their backs were a few state-rooms and the chart-room. Further aft, in a deckhouse of their own, were a tiny smoking-room and Allis's cabin. The huge skylight over the engines ended the upper deck. Above them arose the two funnels, listed to port according to the vessel's perverse whim when heavy, spouting a seemingly motionless pathway of black cloud over the port quarter, with fire-flies of live cinders dancing therein. Above them also was the bridge, with its silent helmsman and its officer on watch. Wee twinkles of light shone on the main deck below, from the extremes of bow and stern; but besides these vague hints of life, as meaningless as any of the million stars, there was nothing to say they were not alone in the universe. Allis, snuffing with keen

pleasure the rushing breeze and feeling the thrill of the strong ship's pulsing struggle into the dark, was wondering, with smug fatuity, what particular pettiness filled the girl's brain. Solely as a diversion, he determined to turn inside out her native narrowness of mind. Vain man, the silken mesh as yet encompassed him so gently he thought himself free.

From the bridge a shrill whistle sounded, followed by a single tinkle of a small bell. A scuffling forward ended in a loud tap of the larger bell on the forecabin. Allis struck a light and looked at his watch.

"Ten minutes to eight," he said. "That's the one-bell, to get the men ready to change watches at eight o'clock. Would you like to see the firemen tumble up out of the fire-room? But no; of course not. They look like very devils, I assure you: like black Jonahs out of a burning whale. It would give you some cause for a nightmare."

"It must be terrible!" cried Jane. "I should think it would be better for them to die than to live such awful lives."

"Ask them," observed Allis. "Not a man that does his share of the work will complain of anything but his food."

"They don't find fault with having to earn their bread by the sweat of their brows—it's the quality of the bread to which they object."

"And how do you know that?" she asked quickly.

"Because I've been there," said Allis.

"You? Not really!" exclaimed Jane, awed wonder in her tone. "Why, what a strange, *strange* life you must have lived!"

"Oh, very," said Allis, a presentiment of an unpleasant sting in the tail of his pastime dawning upon him.

"And yours is such a good family, too," she murmured.

The naïve, unwitting disdain cut deep.

"Say, rather," he suggested mildly, "it was a good family until I arrived."

It was lost upon Jane, who pursued him relentlessly.

"Do tell me," she said, "what did it feel like? And how did you *ever* come to do it? Perhaps you were one of those sociological investigators?"

"I was a candidate for investigation in those days," said Allis grimly. "I awoke that morning in a dry-goods box in an alley off Essex street in Boston, and I went up on the Common to beg the price of a breakfast. There I met——"

"Oh-h! You are making fun of me!" she cried.

"There is worse to come," said Allis.

The girl was silent and Allis, raging inwardly, found his tongue tied. Again came the shrill whistle from the bridge: four pairs of tinkles from the little bell followed, and the big bell forward sounded a magnified echo. The door of the captain's room opened, and the captain's wife appeared.

"My dear," she said to Jane, "will you not be so kind as to help me with this book? It has idioms which are not in my dictionary."

Allis lifted his cap and turned away. A timid hand upon his arm restrained him. He paused in the flood of light, facing the girl.

"Mr. Allis," she said, "please forgive me—but I am fearfully interested. Why do you not come back to your home and try—and start——?"

"And be respectable?" said Allis. . . . "I'm getting it," he added, to himself. "Oh, Lord!"

"—and try—" murmured Jane, but Allis interrupted her, rallying as he caught the absurdity of this bread-and-butter miss counseling him, the citizen of the world, to cloister himself again in the city of busybodies which had been vastly too small for him twelve years before. The captain's wife had turned discreetly away, but the door was yet open and the light shone full upon them.

"Now, confess," he said, staring, smiling, into her earnest eyes. "I'm not at all a proper person—am I?"

"I—I'm sure—" faltered Jane.

"Oh, what a dreadful thing to say!" she cried.

"You needn't say it," Allis told her. "I don't insist. But, as for going back—" He laughed. Purblind as he was, it seemed highly ridiculous to him, and fervently but altogether impersonally and because it was so very funny he winked one eye with grotesque care. Jane's smooth cheeks paled and flushed again with waves of bright vermilion. She gasped, and covered her eyes with a dainty handkerchief. When Allis, lost in his joke, looked for her, she was not there.

In a cool, gray mist a new sun climbed over the horizon the next morning, and with it came waking to Allis, who stepped over the high sill to the deck, his pajamas flapping, and hooked his door to the panel for the entrance of the stirring breeze and its story of dawn. The ship was rolling slightly and in silence, as if asleep, all vestige of effort in its brave plunge northward gone for the moment—even the funnels giving forth but the thinnest of smoke. The hush which shrouded him as he drank of the morning brought Allis out of his first buoyancy into remembrance of his pretty playmate, and thereafter what had been joyous seemed inconvenient, and he went sullenly down to the pantry for his cup of coffee.

The *Barnard's* saloon was a square room crossing the main deck right aft of the two forward cargo-hatches. It was entered from a narrow passage giving in turn upon the gangways running fore and aft along the ship's sides. Close against the starboard rail, opposite one end of this small entry, Allis unfolded a chair and sat down. Through an open port he could see rows of cups and glassware hanging from the ceiling of the pantry, and presently from the galley, bearing a silver coffee-pot, came the steward—a young native of Berlin, his short, black hair erect like a shoe-brush, his face flushed and his brow knotted in wrinkles more savage than his usual troubles ought to have traced.

"Well, steward," said Allis, as he

stirred his coffee, "something tasty for breakfast this morning?"

The steward's eyes met his with sad gravity.

"The menu—the whole business," he cried, waving his arms, "is canned and tinned and preserved! When we can't eat potted and deviled, we shall starve this voyage."

He plucked at Allis's sleeve, forgetting reserve in his eagerness for sympathy.

"The cook," he said, "has fallen last night down the *proviant-raum* ladder—into the lazaret, you'd say—and he's broken his leg. There is hardly any bread, and no meat. And I don't know anything about cooking, even if I hadn't twice too much else to do!"

Allis raised his brows, and the corners of his mouth twitched.

"The second cook," he suggested; "where's he?"

"Second cook!" spluttered the steward. "Bah! for him! A beach-comber, a *Schmalzgesicht*! He can't even scrub the galley floor. And the mess-room steward and my pantry-man are worse—they can't get their own meals. *Blödsinnige Narren!*"

Allis arose and stepped into the pantry. He surveyed the contents of a dozen cupboards, loaded with cheeses, jams, liquors and heaps of tinned delicacies. The steward watched him anxiously.

"Cheer up, man," said Allis at last. "We can manage well enough. Think of the old days of windjamming. Eh? You never lay thirty days in an up-and-down calm, with your hardtack crumbling into meal-worms and your horsemeat loud enough to deafen you. What do you know about war? It's only six days and a butt to Boston, and there are two tons of ice in the *proviant-raum*. Keep cool, my boy."

"Yes, yes," said the steward, with sarcastic emphasis, as he plunged a can-opener into a tin of veal loaf. "I could keep cool well enough with you passengers. You may suffer inconveniences and do nothing but scold. But those black pirates for'd! I am

not allowed to forget that I feed them as well as you. And how long will preserved ginger and candied cherries keep the fo'c's'le quiet?"

"Gad!" exclaimed Allis, "that's true enough." He shook his head, grinning. "You're up against it," he said.

The annunciator buzzed pettishly and the harassed steward, gathering tray and bottles on the jump, plunged into the gangway. Allis noted that the little arrow pointed to the letter C, and he remembered that it was in room C, under the bridge, that Miss Jane's elderly papa was awaiting the summons to view Boston Light. The inexplicable discomfiture, from which he had had respite through the steward's distress, returned to him and he walked moodily aft, his hands deep in the pockets of his flannels. At the galley, a tile-floored compartment, roofed with open skylights and wedged between the funnels, he paused. Two lads—a fair-haired, dough-faced messboy and a lean young Liverpool hooligan from the forecabin—were wrestling in the middle of the floor. Pans and kettles, skewers and forks, pails and cups, were strewn about the top of the huge, useless range which filled the after side of the place, and the cupboards and drawers and workboards opposite were sadly dirty and disarranged. An open faucet had been forgotten—most heinous of crimes—and gallons of fresh water were splattering into the sink.

Allis turned off the water, and, lighting a cigarette, followed the gangway aft to the open quarter-deck, where he sat on the barrel of a steam-capstan and puffed savagely, his eyes on a short stretch of low-lying coast and the rolling uplands at the horizon's edge. A fluttering above him made him turn his head sharply, and he saw a skirt moving away from the rail which ended the upper deck. The sight transfigured in an instant the bogey of diffidence which had barred his way. He dismissed hastily the vague fear that something had gone wrong the night before, and he went in to breakfast determined to have for himself all

of Miss Jane's company which was to be come at.

"On the whole," said he, "it doesn't feel half bad to be reformed. I think I must indulge myself further."

Jane, quiet and with downcast eyes, came late to her place, and the meal, which indeed differed little from the ordinary, went on with some restraint. The captain was at first anxious to keep his passengers contented, and he talked jauntily of hardships suffered in his early days at sea, and promised roundly that before night the cuisine should be rehabilitated if it took all hands to fry an egg. But his wife, who saw how very small a part of the burden on their minds could be laid to the chance of a curtailed menu, whispered to him to save himself for his certain struggle with the whiskered invalid above, and he was silent. The chief engineer, usually overflowing with guttural Hamburg jokes, was plainly worried, and the chief officer, whose habit it was to put three lumps of sugar in his pocket as he left the table, took but two this morning, his playful reference to famine falling quite flat.

Allis, unable to secure Miss Jane's attention at the table, baffled in his attempt to leave the saloon with her, eluded twice by her on the promenadedeck, at last raced helter-skelter around the engine-room skylight and confronted her in the shadow of one of the ship's boats.

"If you were trying to avoid me, Miss Manton," he said, "you could hardly be more difficult to approach."

Her eyes, level-lidded, granted him a quick glance, and her cheek grew a trifle paler.

"How could you do it?" she asked, her voice so low he was not altogether certain she had spoken. Nor did he know what she meant, though the haunting sense of some *gaucherie* committed was again upon him.

"It was the first time," she said, "that anyone ever——"

"For heaven's sake, what?" said he.

"No one ever *winked* at me before!" cried Jane.

The gossamer web pulled tight about

him as she spoke. In his fury at finding himself so surely pinioned, he lashed out blindly.

"My dear lady!" he exclaimed, "I apologize. I abase myself. Please forgive me. I am such a rude barbarian that I had forgotten that I"—he whispered—"winked! . . . Such ruffians," he continued, "must depend upon you finer creatures for reproof when they transgress propriety."

She was regarding him fixedly, her lips a little apart. If she discerned his impudent mockery, she was willing to let him go as far as he would. And he straightway dashed into one of those blind alleys from which there is no escape save by turning around.

"You see," he finished, "I was right. I am not at all a proper sort of person for you to know. I am, in fact, most improper. Eh?"

Miss Jane avenged herself. Without malice, most ingenuously, "I am afraid you are," she said, sighing.

To Allis, schooled in a habit of prudence which had served him for armor, it was a grievous blow to learn that his showy cuirass was but pasteboard and could not bend without breaking. In all his roamings peace of mind had been the motive for every step, and because his mental grasp had so far managed to keep pace with his acquirement of facts he had known how to avoid many of the pitfalls into which the blunderer flatly tumbles. But, because he had not the skill in salaaming youths acquire before they leave boarding-school, he had gone at his task right awkwardly, and what might have been merely a polite obeisance could not, it seemed, turn out other than that chastening stubbing of proud toes which a motherly fate sometimes provides for her froward favorites. The soiled tinsel of a bachelor's self-conceit was useless after such a fall: he was like a secutor in heavy harness delivered into the net of the retiarius, and he felt keenly the unaccustomed proddings of the three-pronged harpoon.

The little smoking-room adjoining

his own cabin sheltered him the rest of the day. He had his luncheon served there—a tasty meal of sandwiches and salads, with ice-cream for dessert—and during the afternoon he successively entertained, man-fashion, with cigars and cooling drinks, the captain, the second engineer and the second officer. When other company failed, he rang for the steward and dragooned him into sitting opposite him, warning the perplexed hireling at peril of *keines trinkgeld*, to carry an air of interest in the absurd political theories which it was his humor to advance.

But the steward's heart was full of woe. Already there were ominous mutterings in the eyes of the vessel, and twice that day had prime roasts of fresh meat been ruined in the ovens. The useless second cook had been disgraced and sent forward, and a coal-trimmer who boasted of glorious days as an omnibus in a Washington-street restaurant, had been chosen by the men to practice upon their victuals. His skill did not serve to accomplish the boiling of the day's allowance of potatoes in a dry kettle, and he went forward to meet his doom at the hands of his mates, whose evening meal could be of little else than jam and hardtack and a heaping armful of tinned meats. The steward had sent along five pounds of butter and a basket of condensed milk, but he feared that these concessions would avail nothing.

With such irrelevancies were chinked the interstices of Allis's rambling monologue, and since he was but talking against time and to cheat that within him which was standing by for a chance to shriek out, "Thou fool!" the sum of human wisdom was not perceptibly increased by his labors.

The grand high wall of Cape Gracias was abeam at dusk, and, contemplating its silent blue message, he commanded himself. He had known all day and he had rebelliously fought against the knowledge, that the indignation which he sought to cherish against the girl could not stand in the face of the spell she had so innocently cast upon him.

Something so very long delayed as to have come to seem fabulous had at length arrived. Far better, he reflected, had it stayed away, for its consummation must be put down as utterly unthinkable. Not the malevolence, was his bitter thought, of all bad angels could have arrayed against it more varied and insurmountable difficulties than, by grace of fortuitous ill-chance, actually blocked its path. He tried to magnify her callowness, to belittle her charm, to think of her as possessing a disagreeable trait—but it was useless. He saw clearly that there was to be no such evasion of the issue: escape by default or forfeiture was as impossible as victory. Even her silly horror of a wink served for an additional withe to bind him, and the mood which had laughed at her had now to do penance.

There was in his awakening as much physical distress as his unfettered emotion wreaked upon his mind, and though the goneness, the longing, the gulping in his throat, had all to do with forcing him to concede the realness of the attack, it was through those bodily sensations that he found one final rampart capable of a brief defense.

"You've been smoking too much today," he told himself. "That's all that's the matter with you. Go easy, now. You fancy you're in love, but a pill would cure you. Brace up. Think what an awful lot of trouble you're cutting out for yourself. You've quashed your chances, anyway, even if you were cad enough to think yourself worth her while."

The end of it was an absurd covenant with himself that the imaginary fox in his bosom should be permitted to forage among his vitals as it would; not one word should escape him to betray its presence, though the voracious phantom killed him.

In the chart-room next morning, Allis listened while the captain buzzed pleasantly of courses and currents. The *Barnard* was swinging along toward the western extremity of Cuba, straining for the embrace of the warm stream which was to carry her nearly to

port. Southward-bound, the captain said, they stood far out to the east to avoid that current, and entered the Caribbean through the Windward Passage, but with half-ripe bananas aboard no chance for speed was to be neglected. Even now the supercargo was saying that a hundred bunches would have to go over the side that day to save a thousand others from the contagion of ripening. "And she doesn't steam so well," the captain added, "when the firemen are hungry."

The steward came to the doorway, and Allis withdrew. Shortly after the white-coated young man had gone below there was a scuffling of heavy shoes on the deck and six stalwart, burly fellows appeared, their hard, red faces shining from recent conflict with soft-soap, their hair slicked down upon their foreheads as with a wet towel, their clean-brushed, wrinkled coats buttoned tight over their undershirts, and their hats held awkwardly between hands so gnarled and blistered as to seem shapeless. The captain stepped from the chart-room, casting a whimsical glance at Allis, who leaned against the ladder to the bridge.

"Well, men?" said the master. There was no answer. The delegates were each engaged in a one-to-five contest for the post of file-closer, keeping their eyes front but pushing and edging backward.

"Come, Peter," said the captain, "speak up."

Peter, a mild-eyed sailor of middle age, coughed aggressively and swallowed hard.

"The facts is, sir," said he, "us foremast-ands, we bloomink well wants somethink solid for to chew on." His words were savage, but his gentle, deprecatory tone took all the sting from them. "Strike me pink, sir," he continued, "if this 'ere slush is fit for dorgs! 'Ow in 'ell, sir, can a sylorman do 'is work on sich-like chow as potted tongue, sir, an' haspic jelly? W'y, sir, it ayn't—it ayn't not fit for—for nothink! So 'elp me if it is! Ayn't that the word, mytes?"

He fell back quickly, pushing an-

other forward. The captain was biting his lip, and, looking upward, Allis saw the chief officer on the bridge, standing with folded arms, his jolly mouth twisted into a sardonic grin.

"Hawkins," said the captain, "what do the men say in your side of the fo'c's'le?"

"The firemen, sir, they ayn't a-sayin' nothin'," replied Hawkins, bowing respectfully. "But for mine, sir, if on the 'igh seas I tykes w'at I gets an' keeps my fore-'artch shut, w'ich doesn't stop me from remarkin' thart if any man arshore come an' orffered me sich chuck for to eat, split me but I'd kick 'is bloomin' backbone right art through the top of 'is 'ead, sir—yuss, an' myke a bloody flarg-pole art of it!"

"A tank so, neider!" grunted a Finlander in the rear.

"Now, Quinn," the captain said, "let's hear Donegal."

Quinn pulled at his forelock, and smiled most winningly. "Upon me blissed soul, sor," he protested, "it's not me that is forivver a-raisin' merry hell about me chow, but be this an' that, sor, I have a longin' in me gizzard for somethin' hot that strong I feels desp'rate, sor!"

"Get a drink from the steward, all of you," ordered the captain, "and get along for'd as fast as you can, and do your work. Let's have no more of this sea-lawyer business. You ought to be ashamed, you big, lazy hulks. You're getting better food than I am. Clear out of here!"

The men shuffled away, their faces blank, but Allis heard them break into murmurs as they went below. He turned inquiringly to the captain, who, novel in hand, was unfolding a steamer-chair.

"Just children, Mr. Allis," he said, as he sat down. "Overgrown babies. And you never can tell what they'll be at next. I've seen less turn a ship's company inside out in five minutes. They'd die like heroes to save the ship, but some silly grievance will make lunatics out of them."

He opened his book, and Allis walked to the forward railing. The

greater part of the open deck below him was hidden by the awnings spread over the hatches to keep the sun's rays from the fragile cargo, but after he had leaned there for some time he saw, coming from the gangway directly beneath him, Miss Jane, a huge working-apron tied over her gown and her sleeves rolled up to her elbows. With her was Enoch, the agile hooligan. He skipped forward, and presently came from the forecandle with an armful of the tin "kids," freshly scoured, in which the "foremast-hands" dinner had been served on a less hungry time. A voice followed him.

"Ho, mytey! Ho, Enoch!" it cried. "W'ere ye goin' with the lydy?"

Allis could see the reddening of one of Miss Jane's tender cheeks, and he caught a corner glimpse of the tightening of her lips. Before he could move from the rail on his errand of protecting her from the impudence to which she had exposed herself, he learned that she had a champion. Enoch came out from under the awning and wheeled angrily about.

"W'ere am I goin' with the lydy?" he repeated, his shrill voice quavering. "Arsk the lydy's bloomin' foot, ye scourin's of a slush-bucket! Cawn't 'e, lydy? Do me prard but 'e's a cheeky dock-rat!"

Allis gasped. "*Strike me pink!*" he quoted, and hurried below.

A vital difference was apparent in the galley. The yellow tiles of the floor were sparkling clean; no litter of unwashed pots, no confusion of brawling youths, jarred sensitive eyes; no melancholy air of uselessness breathed from the great range. There were kettles that bubbled, and from the ovens came pleasant odors. Four men were working quietly—peeling potatoes, chopping meat, washing dishes—and in the heart of it, rosy with the heat of battle and triumphant, stood Jane, a ladle in her hand for scepter. She smiled at Allis as he halted, dumb, in the doorway.

"Here!" she cried, masterful in her own domain. "Please fill this for me."

She thrust into his hand a box, with empty compartments labeled for various spices, and Allis took it and carried it to the pantry.

It was a steward imbued with thankfulness who seized the box with a comprehending elevation of his eyebrows, and sifted spices into their places deftly. He met Allis's glance as he finished, and shook his head meaningly.

"This has been terrible," he sighed. "What you call fierce, ain't it? All over now, though."

"But what does she think she's doing?" asked Allis. The steward gave him another pregnant glance.

"She's doing it. Undoubtedly, she's doing it!" he said, and his tone was solemn, like a chant.

"Undoubtedly she is," said Allis, and walked thoughtfully aft. There was no place for him in the busy galley, so he climbed to the upper deck, where, seated upon the high sill of the chart-room door, he told the captain what he had seen. Evidently, his budget carried no news for the bearded German.

"Listen!" he commanded, as Allis was again speaking. From room C came a burst of maledictions, and the steward dodged, limping, around the corner, shreds of canned salmon dripping from the shoulders of his white coat, and followed by a vehement announcement on the part of Miss Jane's invisible papa that he would not be starved in silence.

"Hot! hot!" roared the invalid. "D'ye hear me? I smell it—good, hot roast meat—and I want some, hot!"

"Is it all for him, then?" was Allis's question.

The captain smiled.

"Won't they, for'd, kick up a nasty row?" Allis continued. Again the ship's master smiled tolerantly, and Allis, hating him, turned once more to the galley, conscious that he was bobbing to and fro as foolishly as any moth that candle-flame ever killed. Jane's face was turned away from him as he stood in the gangway and peered

miserably at the bustling scene. She was directing over her shoulder the basting of a huge chunk of meat which crackled joyously, while at the same time she measured and mixed the ingredients of a salad dressing. Enoch was mashing potatoes with virtuous vigor, and the others were stepping nimbly about in obedience to her rapid commands—stirring the batter for a cake, dipping doughnuts in boiling lard and crimping the edges of pie-crusts.

This slender girl, so sure and certain, so perfectly in tune with her work, was not the giddy, brainless thing Allis had at first taken her to be. But that vain imagining needed no such disproof as this, for he had long since cast it angrily from him. There was, he swore, no gentle charm like hers, no eyes so maddeningly clear, no lips a millionth part so tempting: there could be no smile of lips and eyes comparable in possibilities of unfathomable tenderness with the slightest shadow upon her dear face. But these things, too, were granted—a thousand years ago. He loved her: looking at her, he knew it, and knew that it hurt. But he had conceded that, when the blue majesty of Cape Gracias wedged itself between the futile barricades of makeshift and tergiversation which his folly had reared against her. Why, then, this ghastly turmoil within him? It was only that sight, thought and heart, so long his slaves, were successively turned traitor, with idiot conscience standing by to applaud. Only his will was faithful to him, but the giant already staggered and panted. Forlornest of hopes! never yet, barring reinforcements, has this ancient battle ended, but in one certain way! still are there always those void of understanding who insist upon waging it.

An hour later Allis arose from his meditative seat on a grating hidden behind the tarpaulins lashed over the hand-steering-gear in the stern. He had leaned over the taffrail and stared into the wake until he was dizzy. He walked slowly forward, and as he reached the waist a sound of rousing

glee from the forecastle met his ears. Standing at the head of the gangway, he saw strange doings on the main-deck beyond hatch number one.

Trestles and planks had been thrown together to make a table, over which clean white canvas had been spread. Sitting upon sea-chests around it were the eight deck-hands and twelve firemen who were not on watch. Small squares of sail-cloth did them for napkins; the steward's pantry had furnished them with plates and cups and forks. Smoking upon platters were two roasts of meat, flanked by smaller dishes of gravies, mashed potatoes, peas and tomatoes, all deliciously cooked, and with the breath of the ovens yet upon them. A salad, bread, cake and pies were also there, and for once the forecastle custom of eating promiscuously from huge pans, every man grabbing his own with greedy, dirty fingers, was forgotten. It was a true feast, and the leathery faces of the men were alight with the chiefest joy possible to them—a splendid meal.

Looking upward, Allis saw the captain, his wife, Miss Jane and the chief officer on the bridge. A handkerchief was waved at him, and he gulped at something that again came into his throat, and turned toward the pantry. With a box of cigars under each arm he went forward, to be greeted with twenty merry glances—silently, for each mouth was too busy otherwise to be used in idle speech. Allis opened the boxes with his penknife and found places for them on the table. The demolishing of the victuals seemed accelerated, but no other sign was given. As the fray became less desperate, big Peter turned to him.

"Sylormen is all 'ands an' appetites," he remarked hoarsely. "An' a jolly good job for 'im that 'e ayn't nothink more," said another, grinning.

"The gent'll m'ybe myke a speech," suggested Hawkins, attacking a lemon-pie ferociously. But when Allis refused, Hawkins himself stumbled to his feet, his charred face ponderously solemn.

"Mytes!" he said. "Mytes!" He

choked on a flake of pie-crust and began to perspire. "This 'ere is a blessed rorty bunch!" he announced. "This 'ere is the rortiest bunch——"

"Turn it up, pal! Turn it *up!*" shrieked Enoch, and a guttural chorus of "Set down!" assailed the orator. Enoch arose.

"That mutt's enough to myke a blyomin' ayngel git the 'ump," he declared. "An', speakin' of ayngels!" He paused dramatically, one hand pointing toward the bridge. A strange murmur came from the husky throats of the men.

"She's a lydy! She's a fyre knock-art! Hivven bliss her! She's a reg'lar tyke-darn!"

The lone Finlander supplied the echo. "A tank so, neider!" he roared, hammering on the table with his fist.

Thus did the crew of the *Barnard*, sweepings from the gutters of a dozen seaports, approve themselves to possess gratitude in full measure. Thus also was vindicated the supremacy of that ineffable essence to which Allis had foolhardily opposed himself. In the face of her conquering, he steeled himself no longer against her: his whole concern, grave enough, was lest he could not have her.

The one-bell, warning the men of the approaching afternoon watch, was struck while the cigars were going around. Ten more men would come at eight-bells to finish the havoc wrought upon the food. Allis was glad for them, but he did not linger. The feast was good to see, but its turn was served, its sermon preached, and he strolled aft.

In the small smoking-room that afternoon he tried to take to himself a part of the deep dream of peace which had enveloped all the rest of the ship. The steward visited him thrice with droning, happy gossip of how the Manton father had eaten himself into an imaginary attack of palpitation of the heart—Allis sniffed, and felt morosely of his own pulse; of how the galley, with its morning's impetus, was now able to conduct itself with only a trifle of supervision from the skilful young lady; and of the skilful young lady her-

self, to whose perfections he adverted until Allis had to send him away.

In the glare of the next morning's sun the inevitable thing seemed no easier. It was after nine o'clock when he first saw Jane, standing on the top-gallant forecastle, right in the bows. He pushed his way rapidly toward her. She was drinking eagerly the fresh, good, glowing wine of having eyes to see the glittering million of sun-sparkles, each pure blue swell and heave crested with richest white, and all of it buoyant and thrilling as salt water, mother of life, alone can be. Her lips were wet, and the brine was on her tongue, tasting of tears—but such tears as brave youth is glad to shed when it stands in the wide sunlight of mid-morning at sea, breathing hard against the rush of the winds, and searching with blurring vision through and beyond the circle of sky-line for the landfall of Brendan's Isle.

The man in whose heart the gods of the highway, changing views, new points of looking-on, had held all the rooms where love's altar might have been set up, could see that dust from twenty nations is no less matter out of place, when one dear nook is at length

to be used, than trackings from any mud puddle. Whether he could have her or not, he would at least be as worthy as he could, and as he stood before her he swept ruthlessly from him all that he could think might come between them: nor, even in his abasement, was he wholly despairing of some efficacy in his sacrifice, for it would not have been true worship had faith no part in it. He started again at the place where his blindness had thrust away her instinctive solicitude.

"Miss Jane," he said, "do you honestly think there is room for a traveled fat man in the old town?"

She leveled a merry glance at him and past him, tossing her chin as the brisk rush of air tugged at her hat.

"Would you let him call . . . um?" he pursued dubiously.

It was a crisis. The *Barnard* lurched and sagged and mounted, high, high, higher; from beneath them sounded a cracked voice propounding a world of defiance from a platform whose every plank was an excellent pie; down came the vessel's prow as the swell was met, and Jane, the prim, the narrow, puckered the dainty lids of a clear gray eye, and winked a most audacious wink.



LA TRÊVE

Par Rosemonde Rostand

LES maîtres du château sont absents,—et les cors
Ne font plus, sous les bois, leur sonore fanfare.
Plus de galop brutal, de cheval qui s'effare
Froissant les églantiers en fleurs, et les dix-cors

Pensent le temps fini des chasses meutrières.
C'est la trêve pour les chevreuils et pour les daims;
Ils se sentent chez eux, comme dans leurs jardins,
Et ne redoutent plus le grand jour des clairières.

Entre les églantiers de roses pavoisés
La biche veille en paix le petit faon qui broute.
Sans fuir au moindre pas et presque apprivoisés,

N'entendant plus le cor qui les met en déroute,
Les cerfs, tout enhardis, quittent les coins boisés,—
Et, parfois, l'un d'entre eux se couche sur la route.

November, 1906—10

THE RED SETTER

By Arthur Stanley Wheeler

FROM the direction of the stables the mournful howl of a dog arose suddenly on the heavy afternoon air, and continued, long, insistent and pestiferously penetrating. Harding, striving to arrange his thoughts for composition, endured the din for some moments; then he swore fervently, and touched a button in the wall beside his library table.

"Waters," he said to the suave menial who presently answered the call, "what the devil does James mean by letting that beast make such an infernal racket? I suppose it's one of Mrs. Harding's dogs, isn't it?"

"Yes, sir," the apologetic Waters made answer. "Hit's the red setter—Mrs. 'Arディング's favorite hanimal, sir. 'E seems disturbed in 'is mind, and Jymes don't know what ails 'im, for 'e don't generally make no fuss like this."

"Oh, he seems disturbed in his mind, does he? Well, tell James to put a blanket over his head; perhaps that'll have some influence on his mind. If he won't stop then, drown him, or use a hatchet. I don't care what you do with the brute—only stop him."

Nature had not been prodigal to the excellent Waters in the matter of a sense of humor. "Beg pardon, sir," he said, "but Mrs. 'Arディング's orders is that no one is to interfere with the red setter. She's most particular fond of the dog, Mrs. 'Arディング is."

"Hang the red setter!" If Harding had pandered to inclination he would have followed this exclamation with: "And hang Mrs. Harding, too!" "Waters, will you be good enough to obey my orders?"

146

"Yes, sir." Waters's voice was dubious, but he turned to leave the room with the inevitable—and irritatingly—noiseless step of the British-trained servant. He was at the door when the voice of his employer arrested him.

"By the way, Waters, do you know where Mrs. Harding is this afternoon?"

"She's riding in the Park, sir, 'aving took the bay 'orse and the second groom."

"Very good. That will do."

The man bowed and departed, leaving Harding a prey to suspended inspiration and a captious mood. It was generally said of the semi-popular novelist that he had all the eccentricities of genius, whether he had the genius or not. On the latter point opinion was divided. People who envied him his inherited wealth, unassailable social position, and comparative intellectual success, denied him the possession of even talent, saying that his books would never have achieved the justification of print had they not been backed by the power of money, and discriminating critics noted with caustic emphasis that he always attacked problems which had been attacked before, and almost invariably managed to evade solutions; while, on the other hand, his admirers raved over his style and likened him to Maupassant in the brutal poignancy of his realism. (There never was a realist yet who did not labor under the handicap of a comparison with Maupassant.) This more or less vital question aside, however, nobody attempted to strip him of mere temperament, and one of the phases of this undeniable temperament was inability to work when

subject to the slightest interruption. Consequently, after the episode of the dog, Harding fidgeted with his pencil, kicked over the wastebasket, cursed the dog, himself, and the servants impartially, and at last gave up in despair.

"I think," he said, stretching himself with a yawn, "that I will take a walk and eventually drop in on Katharine. Katharine—God bless her!—rarely bores me, and in any case I shall escape the homecoming of Rose. Anything to get away from this den of torment!"

He set forth immediately, leaving no word as to his destination, but, finding that the bright sunlight and the crowded streets only served to increase his irritation, made his walk as short as the distance between two points would allow. Mrs. Ordway's servant admitted him at once and without question, although the fact was patent that the lady was not officially at home; the novelist was a frequent visitor, and Mrs. Ordway's door was always open to him.

The quiet dimness of the sitting-room into which he was shown acted quickly as a solvent on his fretfulness. Katharine, he was accustomed to say, never made sacrifice to art by filling her house with objects of a beauty so obtrusive that the weary brain was compelled to think in order to appreciate. By this he meant simply that she was averse to unnecessary furnishings and hostile to pictures. Katharine, also, it appeared, knew the value of suspense when dealing with the masculine, for she did not rush down to greet her caller. Neither, by reverse, did she delay long enough to excite peevishness; it was exactly ten minutes after Harding's arrival when a very slight rustle announced the coming of his hostess.

"This is good of you, Eric," she said. "I scarcely expected you before the day after tomorrow. What's the trouble? Can't you trim the wick of Fancy to suit the lamp of Fact?"

He remained silent for a moment, letting her beauty filter through the pores of his senses, but made no move

toward her; it was characteristic of this relationship that they never shook hands and avoided the dangers of physical proximity as much as possible. Then he answered:

"The wick was extinguished and the lamp overturned by the howling of a dog."

"Ah? One of Rose's pets, doubtless." She did not wait for an assent, but motioned toward a chair and continued: "I sha'n't offer you tea, but you may have whisky if you care for it. And light a cigarette, by all means; it seems quite an age since you smoked here last. In reality, I believe it's only three days."

He made himself comfortable in the indicated chair. "No whisky, thanks, but I'll smoke. And you?"

"Thank you." She selected a Turkish cigarette from the proffered case. "Do you know, I seldom smoke now, except with you? I find that solitary smoking makes as much havoc in a woman as solitary drinking in a man. Neither one knows when to stop."

"Excellent idea. The modern cigarette is, at best, merely a sop to the evil of the Age—a palliative grain of morphia administered to a disease for which there is no cure."

"There speaks the prophet of pessimism! And what, O Prophet, is the Evil of the Age?"

"Ennui." Harding made a vague nervous gesture with the hand that held the cigarette. "*Weltschmerz*—soul-weariness—the last, pitiable, impotent remnant of the once great Spirit of Unrest. Call it what you like, satiety if you are an epicurean, injustice if you are a socialist; there are a thousand-and-one names for it, but the thing itself remains the same."

Mrs. Ordway laughed softly. "How tenaciously the shoemaker sticks to his last! Try to forget the subject of your book while you're with me, Eric. Of what value is a pose between us two?"

He smiled but slightly in response. "It's no longer a mere pose with me, Katharine; already I grow rotten with the disease."

She arose abruptly and moved about the room, touching an object here and there—changing the position of a chair, straightening a portière which did not need straightening—all with the greatest care, yet abstractedly, as though she did not comprehend what she was doing. Then she rang for candles, for the afternoon was waning, and a natural dusk had come to deepen the artificial dimness of the room to positive gloom; she hated both gas and electricity, and lamps only a little less—all save the metaphorical lamp, that is, with which she chose to endow her friend the novelist. After the maid had come and gone she crossed to Harding, who had remained motionless save for the regular, almost rhythmical, inhalations and exhalations of the habitual smoker, and laid a hand on his hair for an instant in a rare caress.

"Let's choose a more cheerful key for our symphony, *mon ami*," she said. "Harping on the bass grows wearisome, especially if the harping be all on one string. Or, if we can't be cheerful, let's at least be philosophical; to borrow homelier imagery, you've made your bed, and now you must lie in it. Isn't that wisdom?"

"It's not the bed that I object to so much as the bedfellow."

Again the woman left him and walked aimlessly about the room. She seemed to be struggling against an emotional strain so acute that it found physical expression in sunken eyes and throbbing veins. At last she paused once more beside his chair.

"I wonder," she said in a low voice, "whether it is possible for a man to be a genius and not be at the same time a cad."

He raised his brows in cynical mirth. "Doubtless it's possible, for all things are possible, but precedent is against it. Don't be stagey, Katharine; if I avoid maltreating the letter of the marriage law, surely a few peccadilloes against the spirit may be allowed me."

She opened her lips, then closed them quickly without speaking, and sat down in the chair which she had

previously occupied. Harding continued to watch her with the same expression of sardonic amusement.

"Your attempt at hyper-morality is entertaining," he said. "You may be able to deceive yourself, but you are far from deceiving me. Dear lady, you care nothing for morality in the abstract, and you care next to nothing about Rose. You're merely defending yourself against temptation in the concrete."

She stared, then laughed harshly. "You may be right—partly. As you say, I'm not in love with morality as morality, nor am I in love with your wife. But I do like to see fair play. Sometimes I think I care very little about anything else."

"On the contrary, there's something else that you care about very much indeed."

"And what's that?"

"My humble self."

She laughed again, but more softly.

"How very like you, Eric!—brutal and conceited, and—unusual. . . . Why do we foolish women fall in love with you?"

"Probably because of the three qualities whose adjectives you name," he answered, shrugging. "I have a question of my own to propound: Why is it that whatever one desires turns to ashes when once it has been acquired?"

"Meaning me? You've scarcely acquired me, as yet."

It was Harding's turn to laugh. "I shall say you were not without a very pretty conceit of your own. I was referring to Rose."

Once more Mrs. Ordway moved restlessly; this time, however, she did not attempt to escape the subject. "What's wrong with Rose?" she asked bluntly. "Surely she accords you as blind a devotion as even your avaricious soul can pine for."

"That's just the trouble—she loves me too much. And yet"—frowning—"I don't think it's what she *does* so much as what she *is* that worries me. Rose is plump, and I like thin women; she's dark, and I prefer blondes; she's

irrepressibly lively, and I adore judicious languor; she loves animals constitutionally, and I hate them. In fine, Rose is everything that I detest, and nothing that I admire—she bores me.”

“The last and most vital sin of all—she bores you! That one short sentence might stand as an epitaph on the tombstones of half my sex, I suppose: ‘She bored her husband.’ I think the logical epitaph of generic Man might perhaps be something worse, though not so bitterly banal. . . . And why, if I may presume to ask, did you marry her, your tempers being so antagonistic?”

“The devil who presides over marriages knows! Some fiendish impulse drove me, I think—some impulse bred of the eternal folly of mankind. I imagined that I was in love with her, and my own imagination dowered her with the attributes I wanted her to possess. She flattered my vanity, and I succumbed.”

“Again the man speaks for his sex. ‘Lo, the woman tempted me at the bidding of the serpent and I did sin.’ Oh, Eric, Eric!” She leaned forward, with narrowed eyes. “Shall I tell you something that I’d give a good deal not to be able to tell you? You’re in love with Rose still, though you don’t know it.”

“You’re crazy,” he snapped. “I hate the sight of her.”

She nodded sapiently, smiling as though at the ignorance of a child. “You think you do. If Rose should die tonight, you’d eat your heart out within a year for love of her. That’s the way you’re built—or, rather, it’s partly the way you’re built, and partly the result of circumstances.”

He was lighting a fresh cigarette and she paused while the flicker of the match endured.

“In what way, O Sphinx?” he prompted.

“Well, you’ve always got what you wanted too easily. You were born rich, and grew handsome through no effort of your own; that’s a more than average stock-in-trade for any man. Then you achieved literary

success without extraordinary hard-ship. Oh, of course, I know you worked hard, but you didn’t have to slave as a clerk or starve while you worked. You always knew there’d be money enough and to spare whether you succeeded or not.”

“The more credit to me that I worked at all,” he interjected.

“Undoubtedly. But you’re over-acquisitive by nature, Eric, and if you’d been forced to work harder you’d have appreciated the reward at its true value. As it is, you laugh and despise, when you ought to laugh and be happy. The same is true of the women you encounter; they meet you more than half-way, and as a consequence you mock them in your heart of hearts.”

He laughed, half-vexed. “You analyze me rather neatly. Yet, if I were different, you wouldn’t care for me.”

“Probably not—so universal is the weakness of femininity. And now, don’t you think you’d better go? I find myself a bit tired, and besides, I’m dining out tonight.”

“Kiss me once, then, to show the absence of hard feeling. I know it’s not usual with us, but you’ve been severe today, Katharine.”

He stood up and walked toward her, smiling with his customary perfect assurance.

“I told you that women always yielded to you too easily,” she demurred, as she rose to meet him.

For some moments after his departure she stood where he had left her. Then she roused herself, lifting her hands automatically to replace a loosened tendril of hair.

“There,” she said, “goes a man whom I should hate if I did not love him instead. Of such is the kingdom of earth!”

Upon Harding, as he took his way homeward, the only thought that obtruded itself clearly through the chaotic but tolerably pleasant emotional acceleration induced by converse with Mrs. Ordway, was a merciless one—to wit: dread of meeting his

wife. His was a complex organism, in which intellect was often at variance with moods. When intellect was on top he dissected the moods with unerring scalpel, and made capital thereby, for the success of the so-called psychological writer is in proportion to the variety of his own emotions and his ability to lay them bare. When the moods were in the ascendant, on the contrary, intellect went over the rail, forgotten. In one of these moods he had wooed and won Rose; in another, he had detested what he had done. Continuing the second mood, he had allowed himself to drift back into a limited renewal of an old-time companionship with Katharine Ordway. Now, intellect temporarily to the fore again as the result of a single thought's persistent nagging, he wondered, though rather carelessly and gloomily, into what sort of snarl he was getting himself. He knew the dangers of intimacy with Katharine at a time when he was experiencing a growing alienation in spirit from his wife; for Katharine, being so different from Rose, acted as a constantly increasing weight to pull him away from her unconscious rival.

That Rose was, in truth, unconscious of rivalry he did not doubt, since he considered her too childish to be aware of a condition which had its existence chiefly, as yet, in the intricacies of his own sensibility. The other woman presented by far the more interesting problem—the other woman, who understood him better than he understood himself, and who rarely bored him. He knew that Katharine loved him; what he did not know was whether or not he loved her. Often, in the past, he had thought that he did, and, as often, had been sure that he did not. Katharine could be tantalizing even in surrender, had the gift, unlike Rose, of avoiding by a hair's breadth the abyss of satiety. The elder woman, too, was mistress of mental twists and turns unknown to the younger, as when, for instance, she had accused him of being still in love with Rose. Harding had no doubt

that the accusation had been trivial, a mere conversational pin-wheel, in fact, calculated to provoke interest. Insincere himself, except when in pursuance of his profession, over-acquisitive (as Mrs. Ordway had observed), and easily scornful, he could trail insincerity through a labyrinth of deceit, but sincerity usually foiled him by its very simplicity; hence his success in the devious paths of artificial character-study, and hence also his failure to appreciate Rose, who was nothing if not simple. It followed that he often became fascinated by the flashing byplay of details, to the exclusion of a main issue, and thus while balancing the two women, one against the other, he ignored the fact that one of them was his wife. . . . If only he had not to meet Rose, with her dog-like devotions and her truthful claim upon her attention!

Turning into his own street, he noticed that a doctor's brougham was standing before his door, but attached little importance to the sight. As he drew closer, however, something about the aspect of the house—that indefinable something which disaster lends even to inanimate objects—caused him to forget his cogitations and quicken his pace. He almost ran up the steps, and was on the point of questioning the servant who opened the door when an aunt of Rose's, whom he especially detested, emerged from an inner room and precipitated herself upon him.

"My poor, poor Eric!" she sobbed. "Have you heard? Have you been told?"

"Told what?" he demanded.

The aunt had recourse to her handkerchief. "Oh, it's all so terrible! I don't know how to tell you."

"Tell me quickly, please, whatever it is."

Again the aunt sobbed. "Dear Eric, try to be brave. Rose was thrown from her horse in the Park this afternoon and is horribly injured."

"Impossible," Harding said stupidly. "Rose is a perfect horsewoman."

"It is only too true. The doctors say she can't live more than a few

hours. We didn't know where to find you, and have been telephoning all over the city. Thank God, you've come at last!"

II

ON the evening following the day of the funeral Harding sat down in the library to try, for the first time since the tragedy, to take stock of his feelings. The event had been so utterly unexpected that it had driven the ego temporarily out of his cosmos. Then, too, like most "artistic" natures, he was powerfully affected by the conditions accompanying the actual presence of death. He could imagine death without experiencing other emotions than a gentle and ruminative sadness, but when Death itself, with its gloomy retinue of shuttered windows, undertaker's assistants, coffin, mourners, hypocritical and otherwise, hired music, and a platitudinous parson, crossed his threshold, the philosophical sadness gave place to a childish and petrifying dread, and for a quintet of days he had lived like a man in a hypnotic trance, without the power to think for himself.

To sum up briefly the indecisive result of his meditations, he did not know whether to be glad or sorry because of his wife's death. If the possibility had been suggested to him by his own soul a week before, his answer would doubtless have been in favor of it; unfortunately—or fortunately—however, reality gives a different color to the Possible, and Harding discovered, somewhat against his will, that he rather missed certain little observances which had fallen to his lot during Rose's lifetime. The inevitable half-hour spent in the boudoir before bedtime, for example, had seemed to him an unmitigated nuisance; now, strangely enough, he would have been willing to renew the chance of hearing the girl's prattle, pointless and illogical though it was, and of seeing her laughing face. Lightness of mind has its advantages to the listener, in that it

possesses the power to banish heavier things. The bereaved husband found a cause for self-congratulation in the remembrance that he had never given his wife's fancies more than passive discouragement. Rose had died happy, he thought, in the belief that he loved her—had died mercifully, too, of a sudden blow, without regaining consciousness. In view of these facts, and of the other one, as indubitable to his mind, that his love for her had really ended before her death, he deemed his feeling of restlessness unreasonable. Aside from this restlessness, he told himself, he was sufficiently glad to be free. Thus thinking, he was about to desert profitless analysis for dinner, when he felt a cold touch on his hand, and, looking down, saw a dog, that stood half-crouched upon the rug beside his chair, and gazed up at him appealingly. He jerked away his hand and rang for Waters.

"How did this brute get in here?" he asked sharply, when that worthy appeared.

"I—I don't know, sir." Waters glanced from Harding to the dog with a scared expression. "Hit's the Irish setter, Mr. 'Arding."

"What of it? You seem to think that explains everything. What are you afraid of? Speak out, man."

The servant shifted his position uneasily. "Well, sir, you see it's like this. The red setter—this hanimal 'ere—was—was Mrs. 'Arding's favorite dog, if I may be allowed to say so."

"I know that, you fool. Go on."

"Yes, sir. The day Mrs. 'Arding died, if you'll remember, sir, this dog made a great 'owling, and couldn't be stopped, and the other servants, being superstitious-like, will have it that 'e knew she was to die. So they dare not touch 'im, and let 'im 'ave the run of the plyce."

"The deuce they do! They're even bigger idiots than I thought them. Take him away, and close the door."

Waters advanced upon the setter obediently, but with no very great alacrity. The dog, however, growled at his approach, and shrank back

against Harding. The latter laughed harshly.

"It seems that I've blossomed forth as a protector of the helpless and maligned," he said.

He glanced at the dog, and the beast, meeting his eye, wagged its tail. Something in the creature's attitude struck his fancy—an unusual experience, for he abhorred animals.

"On second thought, you may let him stay. And Waters—I shall leave for The Nunnery tomorrow morning. See that my things are packed in readiness for an early start." And he rose and began to pace the room nervously, "for all the world," as Waters confided to an interested audience in the servants' quarters, "as if 'is black conscience 'ad already begun to smite 'im for 'is neglect of the poor young mistress."

Left alone, Harding discontinued his pacing, pausing in front of the setter, which had lain down on the hearth-rug, and, with head resting on its forepaws, was watching his motions attentively.

"I believe there *is* something uncanny about you, after all," he mused. "You're the only dog I ever saw that would stay in the same room with me of its own accord for more than five minutes."

The dog lifted its head, and with its tail beat a cheerful tattoo on the floor.

Harding departed the next morning for the Berkshires, and the red setter accompanied him. The impulse to seek the open air and comparative solitude of the hills had been an abrupt but not altogether illogical one, for The Nunnery—so called because of its gray and austere appearance, and its position on a hilltop—had more attraction as an abode of mourning for an imaginative man than the stuffy city dwelling. The notion of taking the dog, on the other hand, was flighty and inexplicable except on the ground of arbitrary caprice. The servants, indeed, had an explanation, but they (to quote the astute Waters once more) were hopelessly superstitious-like. Harding himself did not even attempt to explain it; he merely smiled sardonically

as he was accustomed to smile at his own foibles, whenever his glance rested on the animal.

Once fairly settled at The Nunnery, he endeavored to resume work on his novel, but found that the thread of his interest had been broken. Then he got out his notebooks and tried to start a new one. That effort proved equally ineffectual, for the ideas which came to him were not the well-balanced sequences of thought which should have followed the jotted memoranda, but wild and abortive phantasms that showed their impotence as soon as they were committed to paper. Disgusted, he threw aside his pencil, and, breathing the vernal air that blew through the open windows, put down his mental chaos to the call of the Spring, which was shrouding the opposite hillside in tender green. A moment later he made mock of his silliness, remembering that the last half-dozen Springs had shrilled their calls without evoking from him a responsive murmur. The novelist was no nature-lover; the extraordinary capacity for appreciation that had been his from birth, and that might, in other circumstances, have developed into a passionate adoration of natural phenomena, had been forced into a more devious channel and metamorphosed into a merciless curiosity toward the more or less unnatural quirks and deviations of civilized mankind, himself included. Rose had been the nature-lover of the twain. Rose would have rejoiced in the new burgeoning of the trees—would have thrilled to the gentle fiving of the breeze; but Rose, as her husband recollected with a start, was dead. Somehow, it seemed unreal that she who had been so splendidly alive should rest, clay-cold and irresponsible, at this time of new birth. Vaguely discomfited, Harding left his work, with the intention of taking a walk among the woods his wife had loved. On the other side of the doorway he stumbled over the red setter, which had established itself by the threshold of the closed door, trailing its master with the persistence which Nemesis shares only with a dog. He

passed quickly on, but the beast followed.

"Go back!" he ordered.

The dog stopped, whimpering, every nerve a-quiver with desire for a run.

"Well, come then, if you like," growled Harding. He had slipped insensibly into a habit of querulous indecision since Rose's death. "God knows, you don't let me forget your existence for an hour a day. What in thunder do you want of me, anyway? If your color were different, I should say you were the Black Dog of the Furies, sent for my sins to sit on my shoulders until I die."

The setter, released by the word, sprang forward and fawned on him extravagantly.

The Spring wore into Summer, and the Summer waned toward Autumn, and still Harding could do no work. He stayed on at The Nunnery, morose, irritable, shrinking from others and discontented with himself. He no longer tried to sound the reason of his restlessness, but endured it with a kind of assumed phlegmatic indifference. Occasionally he looked at his notes or the unfinished sheets of his novel, then shrugged and put them away; the moods were always in the ascendant now, and intellect had so nearly suffered an eclipse that only on rare occasions did it rise to seek even the last resort of striving to justify its laziness. He spent much of his time in the open, sometimes riding a particularly vicious horse at reckless clip, but oftener tramping the fields and hills afoot, by unfrequented paths that led he cared not whither, with the red setter as his sole companion. It happened to be a rainy season, but storms never deterred him; in fact, he seemed to prefer inclement weather, and often sallied forth into a drizzle, to return long after sundown, dripping, and trailed by the dripping dog, that slopped water at his heels over the polished floors. These excursions were frequently followed by solitary orgies through the watches of the night, when a bottle sat on the table and the dog dozed uneasily beside

the chair. This course of life had its inevitable effect, and people who fell foul of him—especially his own servants—winked and tapped their foreheads. Also, the servants avoided the setter as if it had been a pariah. Harding laughed at their fears; he said that the animal was harmless, and, further, he echoed the opinion of the misanthrope who remarked that the more he saw of men the better he liked his dog. The observation was freely made, nevertheless, that he rarely touched the setter, seeming to prefer to keep it at a distance of a few feet.

It chanced as he was riding through the valley at about noon of an early September day that his horse cast a shoe, and he was compelled to stop at the village smithy to have the damage repaired. The smith stared at him curiously, and a half-dozen loafers gathered at the door. As he stood with a hand on the fractious horse, snatches of conversation, filtering between the blows of the hammer, reached him from the doorway.

"That's the feller that has the big place up on the Ridge, ain't it?"

"Yayuh. Ugly looker, huh?"

"Uglier'n a bull-head. Take a look at that jaw! They say he raises hell whenever his food ain't cooked to suit him."

"Haw, haw! That ain't nawthin'. I bet your wife says the same thing about you, Bill. Haw, haw! They say, though" (here the speaker lowered his voice, but not sufficiently), "that *his* wife killed herself becuz he left her alone too much, an'—" the rest was lost in the clangor of the anvil.

Great is the power of suggestion. It was only the distorted gossip of an ignorant countryman, a trifle less adroit and more vicious than his confrère of the city, but it did execution out of all proportion to its work. Harding had been so sure that Rose knew nothing of his love's waning that he had never dreamed that there could have been method in the accident which had wrought her death. Six months before, in the egotism of his

strength, he would have pooh-poohed the idea; now, when his nerves were worn by sleeplessness and his courage had been shaken by drink, it seemed only too plausible. At the time of the tragedy he had deemed it queer that Rose should have been thrown, in view of her well-nigh perfect horsemanship and the gentleness of her mount, but had accepted the explanation of her horse's taking fright at a piece of paper or a trailing branch, and catching her unaware. Yet what more likely than that her carelessness had been indifferent, or even premeditated? As he rode homeward, little things came back to him—her occasional fits of abstraction, when she had watched him with a curious aloofness, as one might watch and take stock of a stranger, her rare but poignant periods of melancholy, which he had attributed to mere childish whim—and with every thought he drove in the spurs, until the sides of his foam-flecked horse were scored with gashes, and the red setter toiled behind with lolling tongue.

He sat down to a hurried midday meal at the urgent solicitation of Waters, who was the only human being whose presence he could endure with any degree of equanimity. In the cockney's bearing toward him there was a mixture of unwilling hero-worship, strong dislike and sly curiosity that aroused his ironical amusement. He knew that the man had been devoted to Rose, and consequently disapproved of him, yet could not get clear of the admiration which ordinarily faithless servility occasionally feels for gentle birth so-called. Waters, even under the fire of ill-temper's guns, looked after the material wants of his master with undying pertinacity—and subsequently gave detailed accounts of that gentleman's idiosyncrasies to the other servants, as Harding very well knew. It was the novelist's opinion, occasionally elaborated in moments of idle observation, that Waters was making a study of his character. Today, after passing a specially-concocted dish of

which he knew his employer was very fond, the man said:

"White Towers was opened yesterday, Mr. 'Arding."

"Eh?" Harding awoke from a daze. "What did you say, Waters?"

"I said White Towers was opened yesterday, sir."

"Indeed? I thought it was to stay closed for the year. Somebody said so, I think. Has the family arrived?" Harding's train of thought had been so sharply cut short by the abruptly imparted information that he did not notice the gleam behind the professional opaqueness of the servant's eye. "White Towers" was the adjoining estate, acquired and built upon by the late lamented Ordway with a somewhat disproportionate expenditure of money and taste.

"No, sir," Waters replied. "Only Mrs. Ordway, who is to rest 'ere a week before the 'unting season opens. She came up this morning, sir."

Harding pushed away his plate and left the table. So Katharine had come! He had not seen her since Rose's death, nor had he heard from her, for she had avoided the inanities of a letter of condolence. Unreasonably enough, perhaps, he had scarcely thought of her; thrashing back and forth across the floor of his room, he wondered why he had not done so. Surely she, with her unflinching discrimination and knack of doing and saying the right thing at the right time, might have been of avail to quiet his unstrung nerves. Possibly, he considered, she could help him in his present turmoil of torturing doubts.

Toward evening he slipped from the house and took his way in the direction of White Towers. That modern palace and his own less blatant dwelling stood on neighboring knobs of the ridge which ran steeply up from Silver Lake, and between the two lay a wooded depression. This copse—now spattered with the scarlet and yellow of Autumn—was on Harding's land, and he had left it undisturbed, even to the old stone wall that straggled irregularly through it, surmounted

near the middle by an ancient stile. As he approached this stile, he saw Mrs. Ordway seated on the wall beside it, her gown of dull green blending with the brownish gray of the tree-trunks and the gayer colors of the foliage above. She smiled in greeting.

"I didn't know whether you would come or not," she said.

"Why shouldn't I? It's the usual thing. We've met here a great many times."

"Too many?" There was the suggestion of mockery in her lifted brows.

He shrugged; the taste of badinage had grown sour in his mouth. "Perhaps. A bad habit is the hardest to break, you know. . . . You don't seem to have changed much, Katharine."

"I hold my age fairly well, thank you—as the centenarians say. You might have told me something prettier, Eric; there was a time when you were not wont to be so maladroit."

"I dare say. I suppose I've changed in that as well as in other ways, since then."

She rested her chin on her slender hand, and looked at him, thinking that he had indeed changed more vitally than he knew—enough, probably, to take him out of her reach. She was one of those rare people who know their own limitations, and, moreover, she understood Harding to a nicety; she saw in his altered aspect the outward signs of a malady too deeply rooted for her to cure, and while she smiled at him her head was saying to her heart: "I've lost him!" And he, on his part, was labeling her as a piece of human mechanism too finely adjusted to be warped to his needs, too delicately poised to do more than revolve on its own axis. She was a wonderfully beautiful thing of many cleverly wrought parts, brilliant, fascinating, but devoid of the sympathetic flexibility of imperfection. Her poise was faultless in the complex and difficult position imposed on her by birth, choice and training, and in that position she had shone by contrast with a woman of Rose's comparative

gaucherie and impulsiveness; yet Rose's very lack of poise would have rendered her helpful in a situation where the stronger woman found herself impotent. Mrs. Ordway could be sincere from a false standpoint while Rose's sincerity had always been simple, inviting confidence in return. Harding had come to the tryst half-determined to cast his burden on Katharine's smooth shoulders. The determination died without seeking utterance, chilled by the prospective confidante's inability to descend from her pedestal and meet it. To make easy mechanical love to Katharine was one thing; to demand sympathy from her, he discovered, was quite another. Only a couple of dozen words had passed between them, and the subject which was closest to both their minds had not been touched, yet each understood that the bond between them had been loosed—and the woman was sorry and the man angry, according to their separate natures.

As they sat silent, the red setter, which had followed its master from the home, came pattering over the fallen leaves and stood at attention before Harding. Mrs. Ordway stared at it in surprise.

"Why, Eric," she said, "I thought you hated dogs. Where did this creature come from?"

He smiled grimly, as he always did when the setter excited comment. "It's an inheritance from my wife. It was her favorite, I believe, and seems to have adopted me. I stand in place of guardian, as it were."

"How very strange! They don't often take to people who dislike them. . . . It's not an attractive beast, but it looks intelligent—almost uncannily so."

"Exactly."

There was a longer silence. At last she said:

"Eric, do you remember I told you that you were still in love with Rose? I wonder if you've come to realize that I spoke truly?"

"It scarcely becomes you—" he

began. Then, more gently: "Who knows? I suppose one never fully realizes anything until too late."

He left her without a backward thought, unheeding the white pleading of her face, which mutely expressed what her mind failed to frame into words; the meeting had erased his feeling for her as completely as though she had been no more than a name written in shifting sand that the wind blows over.

He walked rapidly home, and shut himself up in his room. For nearly an hour he sat glowering stupidly at the wall, while the afternoon waned swiftly toward night. Then he rose, and stumbled through the dusk to a buffet cabinet in the corner. His hand was on the bottle, when a side-glance chanced to fall on the red setter, that had trailed him, as always, with the persistence of his shadow. A gust of unreasoning, sullen anger shook him.

"You devil!" he muttered. "I'll fix you, at any rate."

He stepped to his desk and rattled one of the drawers. The catch-lock held, and he tore it through the wood with a puerile exhibition of insane strength. From the drawer he took a revolver.

It was a scene from a melodrama—the darkened room, the malevolent man with the pistol, and the "poor faithful victim unconscious of danger"; the chief actor recognized the resemblance, and laughed. Even in the moment of ungoverned passion his hypercritical, artistic sense came upmost, rendering reality unreal.

"Act three, scene two. The villain to the front," he said. He raised the revolver and leveled it at the dog. The animal met his gaze, and slowly moved its plummy tail from side to side. Harding lowered the weapon, then aimed it more steadily. Again he dropped the muzzle, shuddering suddenly.

"Damn you!" he exclaimed. "You have your mistress's eyes!"

For the third time—once more the melodrama—he took aim at the dog, but now the pistol commenced, inexorably and without the apparent volition of its owner, to curve inward, until the muzzle rested against his temple. Harding's face contracted, then settled into immobility; with a resolute forefinger he pulled the trigger—and the red setter's mournful howling aroused the household to knowledge of disaster.



DISAPPOINTED IN THEM

THE FRIEND—I suppose, like others, you meet with disappointments in life?

THE PESSIMIST—Oh, yes; but none of them ever come up to my expectations.



ANXIOUSLY WAITING

BLANCHE—Poor Helen! Has the worst been told?

GRACE—I think not. They're all waiting for your version.

THE REASON

By Violette Kimball Dunn

TRUTHFULLY Letitia could have been said to snort. Also, a disinterested observer might have detected a degree of viciousness in the slight kick she bestowed on the piazza railing with her white canvas shoe.

"It's simply disgusting, that's what it is!" she said, "and if you only knew, Billy, what a relief it is to have someone to talk it over with, you'd be glad you came! Just watch them," she continued, as Allen and Miss Marshall swung past the hotel, on their way up the beach. "Just look at them, now! Really," she concluded plaintively, "I don't know what to do about it!"

Billy Wentworth leaned back in his porch-chair, and lazily lighted a cigarette.

"May I smoke?" he asked. Then, "Why do anything at all? Miss Marshall looks to me quite up to taking care of herself, Letitia."

"Oh, I'm not thinking about her," said Letitia. She perched more securely on the piazza railing, and then went on. "It's that poor child, Carolyn! I don't care a rap about Miss Marshall, but you know Carolyn and Jim have been engaged for two years, and just because she isn't here I really can't see any reason why those two should have a flirtation of this kind. I call it distinctly vulgar!"

Billy started slightly. "Oh, come now, I say—" he began.

"I dare say you'll defend her!" Letitia interrupted. "She'll do to you just what she's done to everybody else, and for my part, I really can't see why! I don't think she's pretty at all. She's too tall to suit me—I just hate tall

women, anyway—and much too slim, and her hair doesn't curl enough to be really curly, just rather wavy, and I don't see what Jim sees in her. She's totally different from Carolyn! I don't admire her at all, personally. But, my dear, the way those two have carried on! Dancing together every night! She simply wouldn't let him go, which I call distinctly selfish of her, because Jim certainly is the best dancer down here. Then they golf together, ride horseback together, go in bathing together, every morning! Why, really, Billy, it's perfectly awful! I should think any girl would have more consideration than to let a man get perfectly soaking wet, just to keep her head above water!" She paused for breath, and Billy seized the opportunity to say mildly:

"Well, you know, Letty, I've always had a careless notion that people went in bathing to get wet, so perhaps I don't sympathize with Jim as I ought."

"Oh, silly!" said Letitia. "Of course people go in bathing to get wet! You know perfectly well what I mean! Why, I've seen him let waves go right straight over his head, just to hold her up so that she wouldn't get her hair wet. And there was I, being knocked over by every single wave, trying to hold poor, dear mama up, and just as full of nasty salt water as I could be!"

"Heroic!" murmured Billy, stifling a desire to chortle.

"What?" said Letitia sharply.

"Too bad, I said," he hastened soothingly.

"Billy, I believe you're making fun

of me! And if I really thought you were, I wouldn't tell you another thing! But, truly, I've kept all this bottled up for so long, it's the greatest relief to tell you exactly what I think about it. You're such an old friend, and only coming last night, of course you couldn't be expected to know anything about it."

Billy followed with his eyes the slowly diminishing figures up the beach. They were still plainly enough in sight for him to watch, with a little thrill of pleasure, the slim, straight figure in the short blue skirt swinging along at the man's side, and the wind-tossed hair, blowing about the dainty head.

"No, of course I couldn't," he said.

"Really," Letitia's voice brought him suddenly back from his land of dreams, "I wouldn't care about it, if I hadn't Carolyn's interests so at heart. Why, positively, I love that girl like a sister, and you know she's simply crazy about Jim! That's why I think it's such a shame for this Marshall girl to come down here and break it all up. Some people say she's engaged too, but I don't believe it. She wears a big blue matrix—like those you got in Colorado—on her engagement finger. Such an unfeminine ring for a girl to wear. I wouldn't have one, for anything.

"I thought, you know, when this thing first began, that in Carolyn's interests, as long as she wasn't here, I'd try, quite diplomatically, to see if she knew Jim was engaged. I thought maybe if she did, she'd let him alone—though I might have known it wouldn't do any good with that kind of a girl! So one morning, when she was out here in the hammock reading, I came out with some embroidery, and sat down near her.

"'Oh, good morning,' she said, looking up. 'I'm trying to get through 'Lady Rose's Daughter.' Have you read it? I think it's great, but the ocean's so much greater, I'm afraid I'll never finish it till I get back to town.'

"'Mama doesn't care to have me read it,' I said. 'She doesn't think it's

proper.' Then I caught sight of Jim, down on the sand. 'How tanned Mr. Allen is!' I said, thinking it was a good opportunity to introduce my subject. 'I think he's awfully good-looking, don't you?'

"She looked down at Jim for a minute, and then she said:

"'Indeed I do; and I think he's such a dear, too.'

"'I've known him ever since we were children,' said I.

"'Oh, have you, really? Lucky you! He must have been a great boy!'

"'Somehow I felt I wasn't getting on very well, she seemed so awfully dense; so I started on another tack.

"'Have you met his fiancée, Carolyn Hubbard?' I asked. 'She's a charming girl. They've been engaged for two years, and Jim's simply crazy about her!'

"'I met her at a tea in town last Winter,' she said, putting aside that awful book—at least mama says it's awful—'just to say "how-do-you-do,"' she went on. 'She's pretty, isn't she? And I'm sure she must be charming, because Jim is, as you say, awfully in love with her.'

"Then I said how blue the sea was that day, and finally I got up, and came into the house. You see, she's just simply one of those people who can't understand, and I saw there was no earthly use trying to do anything with her. There she knew he was engaged all the time, and still she went about with him everywhere, just the same. Mama says she can't see what her mother can be thinking about, anyway."

Billy's eyes again sought the two figures on the beach. They had turned and were coming back, and the man seemed to be talking earnestly to the girl.

"It's been mighty good of you to go about with me this way," he was saying, "and I'm no end sorry I've got to go back tonight. I'd have had a pretty dull time if it hadn't been for you. You know I didn't know a soul down here, when I came, except Letty Bassett, and I expected to be

bored to death. I've known Letty ever since she was a kiddy, but she's turned out such a beastly little prig there's no getting on with her any more. You don't know how much I appreciate your being so nice to me, and—well, please don't quite forget me, will you?" He held out a strong hand, well browned by sea and sun and good salt air, and she turned frankly and laid her own in it.

"Indeed I won't forget you," she said, smiling up at him. "Just think what a lot of good times we've had together. I guess, as I once heard a man say, 'it's been mutual on both sides!' I hope we're going right on being good pals, for you must be sure to come to see us in town. Must you really go back tonight?"

"Yes, I'm afraid I have to," he said regretfully, and together they crossed the sand and climbed the hotel steps.

Miss Marshall, smiling, came up behind Billy Wentworth's chair, and

for the fraction of a second laid her slim, brown hand, with its unfeminine blue ring, on the broad shoulder before her. The owner of the shoulder threw away his cigarette, and straightened up with the creepy, thrilly feeling he always had when the owner of the hand by any chance came into his immediate vicinity.

"We're going over to the links, Billy," she said. "Won't you and Miss Bassett come along?"

Letitia gasped. "No—no—thank you, the sun—" she managed to murmur.

Billy caught the hand in his. "Yes, dear," he said, "I'll be with you in a minute." His eyes followed Miss Marshall as she moved away, and in them was a light Letitia had never seen there before.

"Billy—Billy—" she began miserably, but Billy cut her short.

"Yes," said he, smiling, "that's why I wasn't so awfully worried. She's going to marry me in the Fall."



THE INTERVAL

By Arthur Davison Ficke

NOTHING changes in a day:
Even Love, that is so fleet
When it lifts its flying feet,
Turns but gradually away.

Even Death, that comes so soon,
Lingers doubtful through the hours
Ere it covers up the flowers
With vague dusk and spectral moon.

When the lengthened years shall pass
Finally to where the world
From its slumber shall be hurled,
And life arise from the dim mass,

Then those who watch the night turn gray
Shall know why, patient, still did brood
Our hearts that hoped, yet understood
That nothing changes in a day.

ECSTASY

By Duncan Campbell Scott

THE shore-lark soars to his topmost flight,
Sings at the height where morning springs;
What though his voice be lost in the light—
The light comes dropping from his wings.

Mount, my soul, and sing at the height
Of thy clear flight in the light and the air;
Heard or unheard in the night, in the light,
Sing there—sing there.



IT'S a wise ghost that knows its own tombstone—by the epitaph.



SILENT NOW

EDITH—So you think marriage has improved young Jones?
TOM—Yes, indeed. Before he married he was always advising his friends
to marry!



A STREAM OF TALK

JONES—Did your mother-in-law say anything before she died?
BROWN—Quite a bit—she'd been talking pretty constantly for seventy
years.

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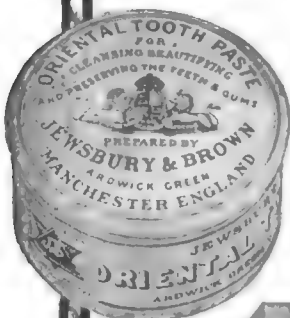
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Dessert Spoons	15.00 to 25.00	"	(Steel Blades)	\$18.00 to \$22.00 and upward
Table Spoons	22.00 to 38.00	"	(Plated Blades)	19.00 to 23.00 "
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Dessert Forks	15.00 to 25.00	"	(Steel Blades)	20.00 to 26.00 "
Table or			(Plated Blades)	21.00 to 28.00 "
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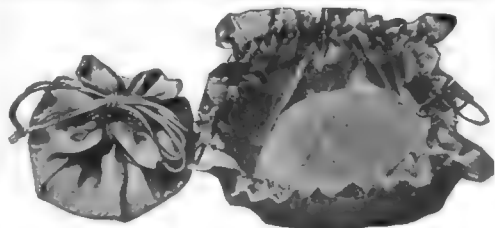
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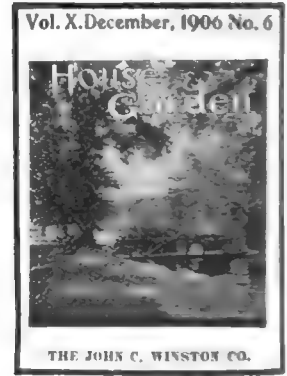
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CHICAGO, ST. LOUIS,
the West and Southwest.

C. F. DALY,
Passenger Traffic Manager, New York.

TO every man and woman there comes the occasional need for a beverage slightly stimulating and altogether harmless. That means

Evans' Ale

IT is rich in all the essentials that go to make a health-giving, satisfying, nerve-making beverage—an ideal drink for everybody all the time.

Any Dealer Anywhere
O. H. EVANS & SONS, Established 1786
Brewery and Bottling Works, Hudson, N. Y.



Buy Your Tobacco Direct From Factory

This trial offer is to convince you who tire of ordinary tobacco that after all there is one that delights continuously. That one is

FRENCH'S MIXTURE

It comes to you direct from the maker with all its exquisite original aroma and known purity. This insures you against substitution and dried-out, stale store tobacco. French's Mixture won't "tire" or "bite" the tongue, because it's a superior product scientifically handled, blended and always in condition. We also sell it direct to save middlemen's profits. We put those profits into improving quality, making it rightfully

"The Aristocrat of Smoking Tobacco"

FRENCH TOBACCO CO.

DEPT. 18 STATESVILLE, N. C.

Self and Sex

The information in these books will insure marital happiness and save mankind untold suffering.

The Sex Series

The only complete series of books published on delicate subjects. Written in a manner understood by every person and information given which should not be hidden by false or foolish modesty. Commended by medical authorities everywhere.

Four books to boys and men: "Young Boy," "Young Man," "Young Husband," "Man of Forty-five."
Four books to girls and women: "Young Girl," "Young Woman," "Young Wife," "Woman of Forty-five."
\$1 a copy each, post free. Table of contents free.
Vfr Publishing Co 988 Land Title Bldg Philadelphia Pa

OFFICE OF



452 Fifth Avenue,
NEW YORK

To Advertisers:

No Holiday or Christmas Issue ever published has excelled the TOWN TOPICS Holiday Number in its stories, essays, poems, witticisms and wealth of illustrations. The present year's issue, which will appear on *December 6th*, will by far exceed in interest and beauty the famous number of last year. It will contain 100 PAGES, and will appear as the regular issue of TOWN TOPICS of that week with the usual amount of social and other news, comment, etc., and 80 *more* pages of highly interesting matter by the leading writers of the day.

Based on the previous percentage of increase in circulation, the edition this year should far exceed 100,000. Advertisers in it will have the benefit of the readers of the regular issue of the paper and of the additional thousands who buy the Holiday Number.

The advertiser will pay *no more* than for the usual issue as *the regular rates* will apply to this great Holiday Number. Every advertisement will be placed in a most desirable position either alongside of or facing reading matter, but naturally there will be some preference in positions and whatever there is in this direction will of course be given to the earliest customer.

Respectfully yours,

A large, elegant, handwritten signature in cursive script. The signature appears to read 'Chas. F. Rosengren' and is written in dark ink.

ADVERTISING MANAGER.

YOU WOULD NEVER BUY CIGARETTES

In the shop if you knew how good our

Made to Order Cigarettes

are. We are manufacturers and sell direct to the consumer. If you would like to try a really good Turkish or Egyptian Cigarette, send us \$1.50, \$2.00 or \$2.50, and we will send you 100, and, as a SPECIAL inducement, put your MONOGRAM on them free of charge.

The monogram and printing costs us more than we get for the first hundred, and we rely on the quality of our cigarettes bringing us duplicate, profit-bearing orders. If you are not satisfied, we shall be glad to return your money.

We could not afford to make you this offer if we did not make a GOOD CIGARETTE.

Samples unmarked sent for 25 cents.

Booklet, "All About Made-to-Order Cigarettes," FREE.

Pinkus Brothers,
Dept. 5 56 New St., New York.

The Collar of Style,
Comfort and Long Wear
for men who want what is right,
at a price that is just.

**London Town
Brand
Linen Collars**

They are made of "LINEN"—4-ply—are collar-shrunk (not piece-shrunk) by the London Town Process, come in ¼ sizes; actually the 25c. quality at

2 for a Quarter

They wear well, wash well,
look well, feel well.

We back up our statement of all-around excellence by a warrantee bond banded around each collar, guaranteeing high quality.

If your dealer cannot supply you, send twenty-five cents for two London Town Linen Collars. Cut shows our "Ramsgate," an up-to-date collar for up-to-date men.

MORRISON SHIRT and COLLAR CO.,
Dept. M, GLENS FALLS, N. Y.

Send for book "How We Be-Linen You."
It's Free.

*The Highest Grade
After-Dinner Liqueur*

DAINTY
DELICIOUS
DIGESTIVE



DAINTY
DELICIOUS
DIGESTIVE

**Liqueur
Pères Chartreux**

—GREEN AND YELLOW—

This famous Cordial, now made at Tarra-gona, Spain, was for centuries distilled by the Carthusian Monks (Pères Chartreux) at the Monastery of La Grande Chartreuse, France, and known throughout the world as Chartreuse. The above cut represents the bottle and label employed in the putting up of the article since the monks' expulsion from France, and it is now known as Liqueur Pères Chartreux (the monks, however, still retain the right to use the old bottle and label as well), distilled by the same order of monks who have securely guarded the secret of its manufacture for hundreds of years and who alone possess a knowledge of the elements of this delicious nectar.

At first-class Wine Merchants, Grocers, Hotels, Cafés.
Bäcker & Co., 45 Broadway, New York, N. Y.
Sole Agents for United States.

DO YOU KNOW The BURR McINTOSH Monthly?

IT IS THE MAGAZINE THAT IS DIFFERENT.
IT APPEALS TO PEOPLE WHO APPRECIATE THE BEST.

It is the most beautiful, artistic and sumptuous periodical ever produced. Artists, photographers, engravers and printers, and all classes of people qualified to find flaws if they exist, pronounce it "the most beautiful magazine in the world."

EVERY PICTURE IS WORTHY OF A FRAME

and thousands of them will be found in frames of various materials, particularly in unique Japanese Wood Veneer, in the best American homes.

50 OR MORE SUPERB PICTURES MONTHLY

Selected from among thousands of subjects, exquisitely printed with fine art tone ink, many of the pages in colors. The magazine is BOUND WITH SILK CORD of a color harmonizing with the color scheme of the cover.

THE DAINTY COVERS

each month are of themselves works of art and excite the admiration of lovers of the beautiful. The October cover shown on the right of this advertisement in miniature is a fair example. It is printed in several colors and gold and cannot fail to please even the most particular person.

WHAT PEOPLE SAY OF BURR McINTOSH MONTHLY

The Hon. Jas S. Clarkson, Surveyor of the Port of New York and an editor and publisher for more than 30 years, writes concerning the magazine: 'Any one of taste could take the pictures in your April number—which I think is the finest collection and variety of pictures I have seen in any one magazine—and make any little home one of art and beauty by framing them. Good luck to you all in your good work. Our great America is behind in art more than anything else, and it is such fine work as people and magazines like you and yours are doing which is bringing our people up to something of a knowledge of art generally and to a finer appreciation of the beautiful in all things.'



OCTOBER COVER DESIGN.

THE OCTOBER, NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER ISSUES

will be the finest numbers ever printed of even this superb magazine. The October and November numbers will be found on all first class news stands and December number will be ready November 20th. Besides the magnificent pictures there will be enough of the best reading matter to preserve a pleasing balance.

OUR SPECIAL AND VERY LIBERAL OFFER

THE BURR McINTOSH MONTHLY is 25 cents a number, except the double Christmas numbers, which are always 50 cents a copy. If you will send \$3.00 to our address below for the year 1907, we will send you absolutely free the October, November, and December 1906 numbers; and for good measure we will also send you the Christmas 1904 number, conceded to be the most superb work of pictorial art ever issued in magazine form up to that time—a total retail value of \$4.75.

If you wish to know the magazine before accepting this offer, send us 25 cents for the October or November number, or buy it of your newsdealer.

OUR ART CALENDAR consists of 12 leaves printed in colors and bound with silk cord. Ready December 15th. Price One Dollar. As an extra inducement to you to accept the above offer we will send it if you will include 10 cents additional with your order—\$3.10 in all.

BURR PUBLISHING CO., M-4 W. 22d St., New York



CASTLE OF CHAPULTEPEC.

MEXICO

MEXICO-ST. LOUIS SPECIAL.

SECOND SEASON—ENTIRELY NEW EQUIPMENT

**Solid Through Vestibuled Train Service
between St. Louis and the City of Mexico**

VIA THE

**IRON MOUNTAIN ROUTE,
TEXAS & PACIFIC R'Y,
INTERNATIONAL & GREAT NORTHERN R. R.
AND THE
NATIONAL LINES OF MEXICO.**

FIRST TRIP—Season 1906-7—Leave ST. LOUIS 9.00 a. m. Tuesday, November 20th.

SOUTH-BOUND.

Lv. ST. LOUIS.....	via IRON MOUNTAIN ROUTE.....	9.00 a.m., Tue.	Fri.
Lv. LITTLE ROCK.....	via IRON MOUNTAIN ROUTE.....	7.00 p.m., Tue.	Fri.
Lv. TEXARKANA.....	TEXAS & PACIFIC.....	11.40 p.m., Tue.	Fri.
Lv. LONGVIEW JUNCTION.....	I. & G. N. R. R.....	2.40 a.m., Wed.	Sat.
Lv. PALESTINE.....	I. & G. N. R. R.....	5.10 a.m., Wed.	Sat.
Lv. SAN ANTONIO.....	I. & G. N. R. R.....	1.30 p.m., Wed.	Sat.
Ar. LAREDO.....	I. & G. N. R. R.....	6.00 p.m., Wed.	Sat.
Ar. MONTEREY.....	NATIONAL LINES OF MEXICO.....	11.35 p.m., Wed.	Sat.
Ar. SALTILLO.....	NATIONAL LINES OF MEXICO.....	2.45 a.m., Thur.	Sun.
Ar. CITY OF MEXICO.....	NATIONAL LINES OF MEXICO.....	6.30 p.m., Thur.	Sun.

NORTH-BOUND.

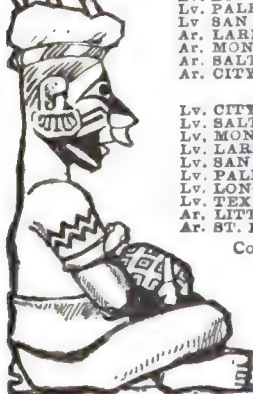
Lv. CITY OF MEXICO.....	NATIONAL LINES OF MEXICO.....	7.15 a.m., Wed.	Sat.
Lv. SALTILLO.....	NATIONAL LINES OF MEXICO.....	1.15 a.m., Thur.	Sun.
Lv. MONTEREY.....	NATIONAL LINES OF MEXICO.....	4.15 a.m., Thur.	Sun.
Lv. LAREDO.....	I. & G. N. R. R.....	11.15 a.m., Thur.	Sun.
Lv. SAN ANTONIO.....	I. & G. N. R. R.....	4.15 p.m., Thur.	Sun.
Lv. PALESTINE.....	I. & G. N. R. R.....	12.05 a.m., Fri.	Mon.
Lv. LONGVIEW JUNCTION.....	TEXAS & PACIFIC.....	2.35 a.m., Fri.	Mon.
Lv. TEXARKANA.....	IRON MOUNTAIN ROUTE.....	5.35 a.m., Fri.	Mon.
Ar. LITTLE ROCK.....	IRON MOUNTAIN ROUTE.....	9.40 a.m., Fri.	Mon.
Ar. ST. LOUIS.....	IRON MOUNTAIN ROUTE.....	8.00 p.m., Fri.	Mon.

Composite Baggage and Library Smoker, Dining Car, Drawing Room,
Stateroom and Observation Sleeping Cars.

For descriptive pamphlets and further information, address

H. C. TOWNSEND,

GENERAL PASSENGER AND TICKET AGENT, ST. LOUIS, MO.



You Can Not Buy This Picture



Drawn by C. Clyde Squires

Copyright, 1906, Life Publishing Company



An Old Love Song

The size of the charming picture (of which this is a reproduction in miniature) is 10½x15 inches. The large print is a sepia photogravure, plate marked. It is hand-printed on Exora steel-plate paper, 19x24, ready for framing.

The Picture Will Not Be Sold

But the large print will be delivered, carriage prepaid, to every new subscriber to LIFE at \$5.00 a year, if we receive the remittance before February 1, 1907.

TO THE FIRST ONE HUNDRED SUBSCRIBERS.—The first one hundred proofs of the picture will be numbered, bearing *remarque* and artist's signature. They will be printed on India paper and will be sent to the *first one hundred new subscribers* under this offer.

In place of "An Old Love Song," new subscribers may, if they so prefer, select prints from our catalogue to the value of \$2.50. The handsome little catalogue of LIFE'S PRINTS, with miniature reproductions of 127 drawings, will be sent to any address on application.

LIFE PUBLISHING COMPANY, 23 West 31st Street, NEW YORK CITY



**MAKAROFF
RUSSIAN
& CIGARETS**

Makaroff Russian Cigaretts

Made by Connoisseurs, for Connoisseurs,
sold on merit alone, these cigarettes are
now the choice of those who discriminate



**MAKAROFF
RUSSIAN
& CIGARETS**

My enthusiasm over these cigarettes is due entirely to my knowledge of them and of cigarettes in general. I admit I am a crank on the subject. I have been a crank on smoke for twenty years. I am a smoker first and a manufacturer afterward. I started the manufacture of these goods strictly because that was the only way to be sure that my friends and myself were going to be supplied with them regularly.

I am now extending the sale of Makaroff Russian Cigaretts to my other friends—the ones I haven't seen, but who are my friends just the same, because they like the good things of life as I do.

Nearly every box of Makaroff Russian Cigaretts discovers one of these friends for me. I seldom fail to get a hearty handshake by return mail.

Makaroff Russian Cigaretts are offered to Connoisseurs (another name for cranks) on the basis of smoking quality alone. They have got to please you as a particular smoker, better than anything you have ever smoked before, or I don't want a cent. They are made of pure, clean, sweet tobacco, the finest and highest priced Russian and Turkish growths blended scientifically by our own Russian blenders. The Russians are the only real artists at cigaret blending—don't forget that.

These cigarettes are blended, made and aged as old wines are—by men with traditions of quality to live up to—men who have spent their lives at it and who have generations of experience back of them.

Every cigaret is made by hand. Every one is inspected before packing. We use the thinnest paper ever put on a cigaret.

Note this particularly—it's a big point. These cigarettes will leave in your office or apartments no trace of the odor usually associated with cigarettes. (You know what the usual cigaret odor is like.)

Another thing—you can smoke these cigarettes day in and day out without any nervousness or ill feeling. This is straight talk and I mean it. These cigarettes won't hurt you and you owe it to yourself to find it out for yourself.

The cigarettes are packed in cedar boxes, one hundred to the box—done up like the finest cigars.

Your Own Monogram

In gold will be put on your cigarettes just as soon as you have tried them out and want them regularly.

I will gladly send you full information about these cigarettes, but talk is deaf and dumb compared with actually smoking them. Smoke is the final test.

My Offer

Send me your order for a trial hundred of the size and value you prefer. Try the cigarettes—smoke the full hundred if you wish. If you don't like them say so and your money will be instantly returned. You need not trouble to return any of the cigarettes. I will take my chances on your giving any you don't want to someone who will like them and who will order more.

If you wish to enjoy cigarettes at their best, without injury to your health, to your own sense of refinement or that of your friends, tear out the coupon now and get acquainted with real cigaret quality.

Special to Dealers

I am spending a large appropriation each month in magazine advertising to introduce these cigarettes. I want one first-class dealer in every town of importance as distributor, and to such I can turn over a good business, established and growing. Write me.

THE MAKAROFF COMPANY OF AMERICA

(G. NELSON DOUGLAS)

95 MILK STREET, BOSTON, MASS. SUITE 85

Draw a circle around the price indicating your selection

CZAREVITCH SIZE { \$2.00, \$3.00, \$4.00 per 100
Three Values

CZAR SIZE { \$2.50, \$4.00, \$6.00 per 100
Three Values

Above blends also made in ladies size. Prices on application

Find enclosed remittance for \$

in favor of G. Nelson Douglas for which
please send me, prepaid, hundred
cigarettes of size and value indicated

hereon.

Name

P. O.

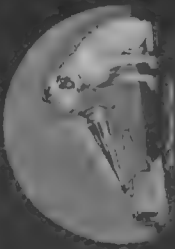
The Victor Company announces the production of Verdi's Masterpiece, "Il Trovatore", complete from the opening chorus to the finale of the last act, by the principals, chorus and orchestra of the La Scala Theatre, Milan, Italy.

Now on sale at all leading Music Houses and Talking Machine dealers, full score in 20 Records, \$21.60, or single selections as per catalogue.

THE VICTOR TALKING MACHINE CO.

Camden, N. J. U. S. A.

Belmont Gramophone Co. of Montreal
Canadian Distributors



What Paris Master Modistes HAVE MADE B U R B Y

DISPLAYS IN NEW
TEMPORA COLORINGS

Introducing the correct millinery modes and inviting your inspection and criticism. Our showing represents the foremost model hats of the season—creations emanating from such master milliners as

*Georgette Reboux, Camille Roger,
Esther Mayer, Charlotte*

and other authoritative modistes.

THE MILLINERY OF PARIS

we invite you to view, not alone the product of the most artistic and skillful handicraft from the world's most famous workers, but pictures in plumes and crinolines, vignettes in velvets and laces, portrayed by modern genius and art.

PARIS IS PORTRAYED IN ALL HER MILLINERY MASTERY TO-DAY

We are told that never has the millinery been more *picturesque*. Never have color combinations been so *harmonious*. Never has anything in millinery been so universally *becoming*.

The hats show broad brims, flaring in many daring and piquant styles, high crowns of dashing effectiveness, velvets, satins, some touched with gold and silver, magnificent and graceful ostrich plumes, large buckles, and the flowing veils and scarfs.

It is an exhibition full of marvel and delight. The best that Paris knows is before you.

TELEPHONE 3809 38TH STREET



Smart

Styles

PARIS ADDRESS:
Rue D'Hauteville 28

Burby 434
IMPORTER OF FIFTH AVENUE
French Hats
New York.

"THE NOTE OF DISTINCTION"



"High
as
the Alps
in
Quality"



You never
grow tired
of
PETER'S
It's deli-
cious and
wholesome

LAMONT, CORLISS & CO.,

Sole Importers,
NEW YORK.

DUPONT BRUSHES

When You Buy Brushes

for the teeth, hair, face, hands, etc., always look for **DUPONT'S** name. It insures quality, wear, cleanliness, absolute satisfaction.

DUPONT BRUSHES are the best made in the world—the best "bristles" and "backs" put together by the most skilled labor in an absolutely clean and sanitary factory—the largest and most complete in the world. **DUPONT BRUSHES** outlast two or three ordinary brushes—but cost you no more.

Hundreds of styles and sizes, all woods—**REAL EBONY**—bone, pearl, ivory, etc. Price to suit every purse. At all good stores. Your dealer will get them if you insist—if not we will tell you where to get them.

FREE BOOKLET explaining how to select and take care of brushes, etc., sent on receipt of your name and address and dealer's name.

E. DUPONT & CO.,
PARIS, BEAUVAIS, LONDON
New York Office, 26-28 Washington Place

"Hydro-Massage"



No morning toilet complete without this remarkable invention. "Hydro-Massage" brings into your bathroom what you have long looked for. Every woman desires to keep the clear skin and healthy glow of youth. Massage is admittedly the only great beautifier and preserver of the complexion, but hitherto the electric vibrating devices have been too complicated and too expensive to admit of general home use.

"Hydro-Massage" is perfect and practical. The power is furnished by A Little Wonder Water Motor which attaches to bathroom faucet. Absolutely simple! Costs nothing to run, costs little to buy when compared with the \$50 to \$100 asked for electric vibrators. No woman need fear lines or wrinkles with this device to guard her. A delightful exhilaration follows its use and its effect is equally beneficial to the scalp, nerves, muscles and complexion.

Every man should use "Hydro-Massage" for two minutes after his morning shave. It will set him on his toes, make his face tingle with fresh blood, and stimulate his scalp like nothing else. It's great! \$15.00 brings motor and "Hydro-Massage" attachment complete. With it comes our guarantee of satisfaction. Send us your check or money order today. You will like it!

Warner Motor Company,

Dept. C.

Flatiron Bldg., New York City.

**IF ANY DEALER
OFFERS YOU
A SUBSTITUTE
WHEN YOU
ASK FOR**

THE

Velvet Grip

Sample Pair,
Mercerized 25c.
Full Size
\$1.00
Receipt of
\$1.00

**CUSHION
BUTTON**

HOSE SUPPORTER

INSIST ON HAVING THE GENUINE

**OVER TWO HUNDRED STYLES
WORN ALL OVER THE WORLD**

**LOOK FOR THE NAME AND THE
GEOGRAPHIC MOULDED RUBBER BUTTON**

GEORGE FROST CO., MAKERS, BOSTON, MASS., U.S.A.



VOSE PIANOS

Write for Catalogue D

VOSE & SONS PIANO CO.,

have been established over 55 YEARS. By our system of payments every family in moderate circumstances can own a **VOSE** piano. We take old instruments in exchange, and deliver the new piano in your home free of expense. and explanations.

160 Boylston St., Boston, Mass.

Go gle

✓ 20 us 4
806

SMART SET ADVERTISER



LOWNEY'S

BREAKFAST COCOA

The Best Cocoa Made
Anywhere - at any Price
It's Flavor, Quality and
Strength are Unequaled
The Most Delicious
The Purest Possible

THE WALTER M. LOWNEY CO. BOSTON, MASS.
MAKERS OF CHOCOLATES & COCOA

DR. J. PARKER PRAY'S
TOILET PREPARATIONS
THREE GRACES
CREAM VAN OLA
 For softening and whitening the skin. Feeds and nourishes the tissues, and is considered the standard by the fastidious. Jars, 25 cents.

ROSALINE
 Cannot be detected, gives the face and nails a delicate rose tint that is truly beautiful. ROSALINE is not affected by perspiration or displaced by bathing. Jars, 25 cts.

ONGOLINE
 Bleaches and cleans the nails, removes ink, hosiery and glove stains from the skin; guaranteed harmless. Bottles, 50 cents.

Dr. J. PARKER PRAY'S preparations are being imitated, and the public should insist upon having the original with the full name, Dr. J. Parker Pray, stamped on every package.

Send stamp for illustrated catalogue of prices.
 Goods sent on receipt of price and postage.

Dr. J. PARKER PRAY CO.
 Sole Manufacturers and Prop's,
 10 and 12 EAST 23d ST.,
 New York City.



The LOVE LETTERS of a LIAR

By Mrs. William Allen

* * In graceful, appealing and ardent epistles, an American Girl is wooed by an American man. These "Letters" are a record of that wooing.

No similar book can compare with the style and cleverness of this delightful series.

Do not miss the pleasantest of hours in reading these LETTERS.

Prettily printed on thick deckle-edge paper, and bound in flexible imitation leather.

Price 50 Cents, Postpaid

ESS ESS PUBLISHING CO.,
 452 Fifth Avenue, New York

Send 25 cents and we will send you the
 Remarkable Novel

By ANITA VIVANTI CHARTRES

"THE HUNT FOR HAPPINESS"

THIS IS WHAT "THE NEW YORK HERALD" SAYS OF THIS STORY:

"There is not a dull page in it from beginning to end. The characters . . . are not commonplace, and the incidents . . . are legitimately sensational. The author has drawn her characters well, notably *Lea*, the central figure." :- :- :- :-

You will not regret spending a "quarter" on this intensely
 interesting and entertaining story.

SEND STAMPS OR MONEY TO
 TOWN TOPICS, :: :: 452 Fifth Avenue, New York

NEW GIFT BOOKS



Hiawatha

With pictures by
HARRISON FISHER

Longfellow's great epic of aboriginal American life needs no words of praise or exposition.

Harrison Fisher's illustrations meet perfectly the pictorial needs of this most beautiful and romantic poem.

There are more than sixty pictures in the book; many of them in color.

Delicate tinted decorations designed by Earl Stetson Crawford blend and bind the whole and help to make it the most elaborate Gift Book of the Year.

Size seven by ten inches
In a box \$3.00, postpaid

The Legend of Sleepy Hollow

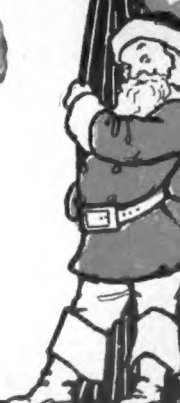
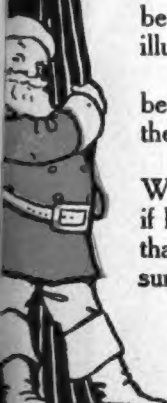
With pictures by
ARTHUR I. KELLER

This sparkling gem of humor has been the ambition and the despair of illustrators for many, many years.

Now for the first time pictures have been made that will thoroughly delight the many lovers of this classic.

Mr. Keller has done them much as Washington Irving himself would have, if he had been the artist with the brush that he was with the pen. The most sumptuous gift book of the season.

Size seven by nine inches
In a box \$2.00, postpaid



THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY PUBLISHERS INDIANAPOLIS

THE RILEY BOOKS



THIS PICTURE FROM

THE NEW RILEY BOOK

While The Heart Beats Young

Mr. Riley has selected for this book the very cream of his poems about children. The foremost child artist of the country has illustrated them with great fullness and has caught the spirit of the verse in a wonderful way.

Sixteen full page illustrations in four colors, more than twenty-five smaller pictures in two colors.

Illustrated by **ETHEL FRANKLIN BETTS**

Size 8x10 inches. In a box, \$2.50, Postpaid.

James Whitcomb Riley's Other Volumes

Neighborly Poems

Sketches in Prose

Afterwhiles

Pipes o' Pan at Zekesbury

Rhymes of Childhood

The Flying Islands of the Night

Green Fields and Running Brooks

Armazindy

A Child World

Home-Folks

His Pa's Romance

The above, bound in red cloth
12mo, each \$1.25, postpaid.

Riley Poems in Sets — Greenfield Edition. Revised and improved, 1905. Sold only in sets. The above eleven titles, uniformly bound in sage-green cloth. 12mo, uncut, in oak case, \$13.50; in half-calf, \$27.00.

Old Fashioned Roses

Printed on hand-made paper, and bound in blue and white cloth, 16mo, \$1.75, postpaid.

The Golden Year

Selections for the year round, uniform with "Old Fashioned Roses." 16mo, \$1.75, postpaid.

A Defective Santa Claus

A Christmas poem. Illustrated by Will Vawter and C. M. Relyea. Net, \$1.00. Post 10c.

Riley Child-Rhymes

With Hoosier pictures by Will Vawter.

Riley Love-Lyrics

Illustrated with over fifty studies from life by William B. Dyer.

Riley Farm-Rhymes

With country pictures by Will Vawter.

Riley Song o' Cheer

Poems of gladness, content, and consolation. Pictures by Vawter.

The above four volumes, green cloth, 12mo, each, postpaid \$1.25, or the set in a box \$5.00 postpaid.

THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY PUBLISHERS INDIANAPOLIS